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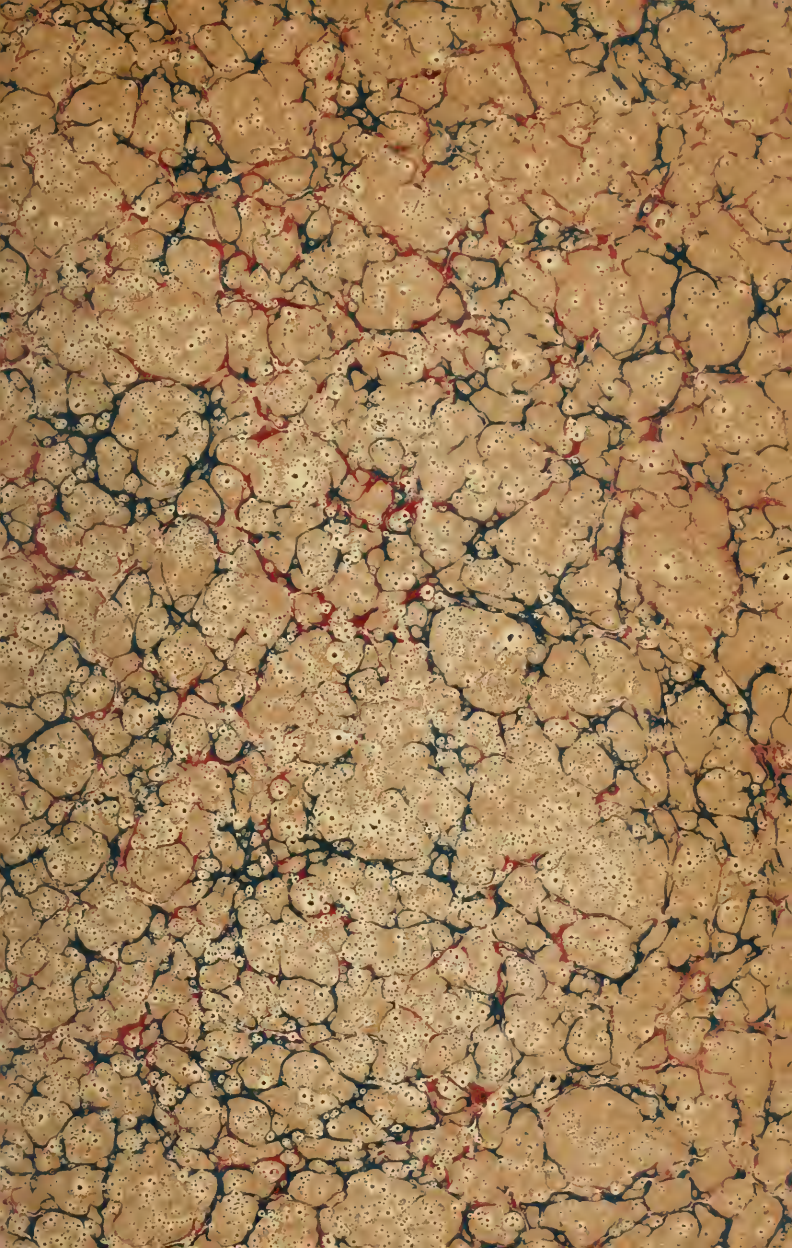


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# CITHERN



POEMS

FOR

RECITATION &c.

*By*

*Emilia Aylmer Blake*

( M<sup>RS</sup> AYLMER GOWING )

AUTHOR OF "BALLADS & POEMS" ETC

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A DEATH-RING  
VERE DELMAR  
THE CLOUDS BETWEEN THEM  
LOVE'S LABOUR GAINED

---

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ETC.

BY  
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# THE CITHERN.

---

## THE JUBILEE YEAR,

*JUNE 20TH, 1886.*

---

### TO THE QUEEN.

LADY, our Queen ! To thee our eyes' desire  
Cleaves in sweet homage next to Him alone,  
The shadow of whose chariot wheels of fire  
Falls on thy earthly throne ;

For thou, dear Sovereign, from thy tender youth,  
For fifty years hast held thy glorious reign  
In right and mercy—tempered, of a truth,  
With touch of human pain.

Yes, thou who dwell'st on that lone seat apart,  
Earth's highest—wear'st the veil of mortal woe  
Beneath thy diadem, and grief's deep heart,  
Like one of us, dost know.

Others have compassed empire by the sword,  
And, throned above a sea of fire and blood,  
Have taught the trampled earth to know her lord  
And conqueror, unwithstood ;

But thou with tears hast more prevailed than these,  
Great mother of the world's imperial race !  
Whose millions teem like children round thy knees,  
Gathered to seek thy face.

For all thy loss—for wedlock's holy kiss,  
For perfect love, fair virtue's richest dower,  
The Father of us all has given thee this  
Most blessed Sovereign power,

To heal and bind the nations, one by one,  
To draw the borders of the South and West  
Unto the morning land, in union  
Gathered to England's breast.

The golden circlet shines about thy head,  
A link of love to join them from afar,  
Who dwell in freedom's light and safety, shed  
Down from thy Empire's star.

So, rings of growth upon the British oak  
Have marked thy prosperous years of sovereign sway,  
And children's children, England's line unbroke,  
Arise and bless thy day :

The promise of a stem of Royal kings,  
Mirrored in hope's illimitable sea,  
To flourish through the change of earthly things,  
Champions of liberty !

Through them, thy thoughts shall live and perish not—  
His, too, untimely gone to his reward,  
Who shaped thy course with wisdom unforgot,  
Thy heart's true wedded lord.

Together at the gates of Paradise  
Ye dwelt, till love became sublime by faith,  
And light was given to the weeping eyes  
To pierce the veil of death.

Long be thy days of earthly blessing yet,  
Empress, till God in glory shall restore  
Thine own, and on thy brow of sorrow set  
Joy's crown for evermore !

## ALICE AYRES.

---

*The Story of a Fire which occurred in the Borough, April 24th,  
1885.*

---

WHAT'S there beneath, where the flowers in a heap  
Rain down like the snows of May,  
That a fellow like me should turn and weep  
As I linger to go away?

My heart is that full I scarce can speak—  
And, mates, ye may well look strange  
At the hard, rough man with tears on his cheek—  
Yes, faith, I have suffered a change.

What has happened? Well, one dark night  
Last week, I was roaming about  
Through London streets, when a sudden light  
Woke me up with a start and a shout:

Fire, fire! ere I knew the words I had said,  
They were echoed deep and loud,  
With a cry of terror to raise the dead  
From the lips of the gathering crowd.



Round a blazing oil-shop they hustle quick,  
Like flies where the flames shoot tall,  
And the choking smoke burst dark and thick  
Through the chinks of the cracking wall.

In the burning frame of a window above  
Was set a woman's form,  
And a cry, "Help, help, for God's dear love!"  
Rang out above the storm.

Quick, quick, to the rescue, firemen brave  
With shouts and galloping feet!  
"They come, they come, but too late to save,"  
The cry rose up from the street.

Each man his coat, each woman her shawl,  
They stripped themselves, and bound  
In a mass together to break the fall  
From topmost floor to ground.

"Leap, leap," they cried, to the ashen face  
Hemmed round with darts of flame:  
But she vanished three times from that fearful place,  
And three times back she came.

Down through the window, a broad, soft bed  
She flung on the cruel stones,  
Then calmly bore forth in her arms and led  
Three helpless little ones.

One by one on the bed beneath  
She dropped the children down,  
Three lives redeemed from fiery death,  
While she thought not of her own.

When we saw her totter through blinding smoke  
As her strength with her breath should fail,  
From a sea of flamelit faces broke  
One agonising wail :

“ For God’s sake, save yourself,” they shriek,  
As they raise the outstretched bed ;  
Towards the tongues of fire that licked her cheek  
The girl turned round her head.

Oh God ! those eyes of anguish wild,  
Those white lips of despair  
Cast back on the mother and youngest child  
Sunk, choked and senseless there !

She could no more—in her frenzy wrought  
To a rash and sudden spring—  
Headforemost, in our arms we caught  
A crushed and speechless thing !

With shouts through the night speed the firemen brave,  
As the fountains of flame shoot higher :  
A rush of waters—too late to save  
From the grasp of the fiend of fire !

Dust and ashes were all that was left

When they passed that smouldering door ;  
None lived of that house but those infants bereft,  
And she who spoke no more.

I have looked on many an awful sight

On land and aboard o' ships,  
But none like that—lying still and white,  
With a smile upon her lips.

We lifted her gently one and all—

No sound of life, no stir,  
While we bore her to the hospital,  
Gave hope to our hearts for her.

I hung like a ghost about the place

Where silent in peace she lay,  
With the happy smile on her fair young face,  
Till they knew she had passed away.

From her village home we carried her forth

For a noble burial ;  
Ay, a hero's grave the maiden were worth  
Who died at duty's call.

No soldier nor sailor by land or sea

In the bed of honour laid,  
Was ever more great of heart than she,  
That simple serving maid.

Ay, all she had she gave—her life,  
For the babes she never bore ;  
What could the mother and the wife  
For flesh of her flesh do more ?

Like a comrade fallen, the firemen brave  
Her snow-wreathed coffin bear,  
And twenty maidens surround her grave,  
In raiment white and fair.

I can well believe by the power of God  
A heavenly angel sprung  
From that broken lily beneath the sod,  
When earth to earth we flung.

This deed she has done shall be hallowed yet  
By a people's tears and prayers,  
For England our mother can never forget  
Such a daughter as Alice Ayres.

THE  
GOOD LORD SHAFTESBURY.

(October, 1885.)

---

HE has passed, our knight of the stainless shield,  
Through the shadow of the door,  
To the wondrous glory, unrevealed  
Till time shall be no more.

The noble and mighty is laid to rest,  
Who was girt about his knee  
With honour's symbol, and bore on his breast  
The star of chivalry.

Nor ever of Britain's heroic breed  
Went forth to dare and do  
A bolder champion, in word and deed,  
More stout of heart, more true,

To right the helpless, and lift again  
God's children fallen low,  
By a hand that thrilled with others' pain  
At the touch of want and woe.



In the human outcasts, the abject and base,  
    By sin and misery trod,  
Could his loving eye of compassion trace  
    The image of his God.

For tender children his soul was vexed,  
    For their bodies' maim and soil  
Through oppression's greed, for women unsexed,  
    Made vile by shameful toil.

Unto all such as these would he condescend,  
    Till he led them by the hand  
Out of guilt's dishonour, and stood their friend  
    'Mongst the princes of the land.

And he taught them mercy—the law of love  
    To every living thing,  
For the cry of the speechless is heard above  
    In the courts of creation's King.

He has lived his life, and, ripe of days,  
    The garnering angels cull  
The golden fruit, and with joy and praise  
    They have made death beautiful.

His spirit has looked through the eyes of clay  
    Its last upon his own,  
And the quenchless light of another day  
    In their tender gaze has shone.

God's poor shall hallow his burial  
    With the tribute of grateful sons ;  
By thousands and thousands they follow, all  
    His hosts of rescued ones.

And the land has hope that bears in her breast  
    One pure in heart as he,  
By her princes and people so honoured, so blest—  
    The good Lord Shaftesbury.

# VICTOR HUGO.

(*June, 1885.*)

---

Why sits fair France on her throne of grief  
    Bowed down 'neath the arrow of fate,  
Like a queen bereaved of her prince and chief,  
    Sore weeping for loss of her mate ?

No iron hand of a warrior king  
    Yields up to dissolving death  
His royal sceptre and marriage ring  
    With the sigh of departing breath.

'Tis her Victor singer, her voice among men,  
    Her lord of the eloquent word,  
Whose lips lie sealed where never again  
    The thoughts of his heart may be stirred.

Of a nation's great sorrow the symbols drape  
    Her monuments of fame ;  
And the lights of Paris burn shrouded in crape  
    With a dim funereal flame.

Weep, mother city, remembering, fond,  
    Who touched thy ancient stones  
With the quenchless spark of a glory beyond  
    All the sword of conquest owns :

Thy poet son, and thy champion strong  
    To suffer upon thy part,  
Through thy darkest days of reproach and wrong—  
    The large and pitiful heart.

Ay, for this the most, on the pauper's bier  
    That carried his corse, as he bade,  
Have a mighty people, with many a tear  
    Their tribute of honour laid.

For this the most, 'neath the glorious arch  
    Of triumph his body lay,  
For a day and a night, till the funeral march  
    Rolled forth on the Victor's way.

France gave but his due, when she gave him all  
    The wealth of her homage, nor  
Decreed him less noble burial  
    Than her first great Emperor.

For this the most, the scorner of Rome  
    As a child of our God, we trust,  
May see the light of a Father's home  
    In the mansions of the just.

No loftier spirit e'er issued forth  
    God's everlasting door ;  
No tenderer bosom e'er cherished on earth  
    His infants and His poor.



## A MISADVENTURE.

---

*Occurred at Little Malton, Sussex, in September, 1884.*

---

NURSLINGS of an English mother,  
Up to manhood's pith and bone  
Sprung, beside his little brother,  
Samuel, her first, her own.

Proud in strength, his six days' labour  
Finished, apt for sport and cheer,  
At the call of pipe and tabor  
Marched the gallant volunteer,

Through the hamlet to the common—  
And the mother's eyes would swim  
When the lone and weary woman  
In the ranks could single him ;

'Mongst those restless, daring spirits,  
Taught the uses of command,  
And the part each son inherits  
In the honour of the land.

Living bulwark, iron steady,  
Valour schooled in hours of play  
How to wield the weapon ready  
For the battle's stern array.

And when work or drill was over  
At the close of evening,  
With the light laugh of the rover  
Would the widow's cottage ring.

Once he came—as 'twere another  
Than himself, with voice so strange,  
Rude in jest with his young brother  
Seared and wondering at the change,

That the frightened boy entreated,  
Soothed, and led him towards a chair ;  
Scaree a quiet moment seated  
Could the lad restrain him there.

Up he sprang, and wildly laughing  
Snatched his rifle from its place—  
In his mood of savage chaffing  
Aimed it at his mother's face,

And, within a moment after,  
Lay a dying woman there,  
And the shouts of drunken laughter  
Sank to wailings of despair.

“ I am shot,” she moaned ; he heard her—

On his knees, the wretched son  
Felt the creeping stain of murder :

“ Oh my God, what have I done ?

“ Have I killed her ?—poor, poor mother !”

Groaned he o’er her as she lay :  
Then he flung aside his brother,  
Cried aloud and broke away.

What could late remorse do for her ?

Living voice no more shall rouse  
Sleep like that—whose livid horror  
Drove him frenzied through the house.

His the hand that quenched for ever

All the love, the hope, the care  
That till now had failed him never—  
This was more than man could bear.

As the lightning’s stroke had killed him

Down he sank—nor moved again—  
Yet her spirit’s whisper thrilled him :  
“ Mother-slayer—worse than Cain !”

Long he lay in stillness colder

Than the dead—till Justice came,  
And with hand upon his shoulder,  
Bade him rise and meet the blame.

And the slayer of his mother  
    Stood before the coroner,  
While, half dead with grief, his brother  
    Told how all had chanced to her.

Horror rigid, and with creeping  
    Of the flesh, the red right hand  
Pledged the oath, and, broke with weeping,  
    Words fell echoing through the land ;

And the souls they thrill and harrow  
    Doubt no more that he speaks true  
Of his madness and his sorrow,  
    Of his love for her he slew.

“ Misadventure,”—so consenting,  
    Did they let him go his way  
Through the years, where no repenting  
    Can undo that yesterday.

Drink, the woful spring of evil—  
    Death and hell have bred no worse—  
Drink, the smooth and creeping devil  
    Lured him 'neath the murderer's curse.

## A CHRISTMAS BALLAD.

---

HAIL, Birthday of the Prince of Peace,  
Season most deeply blest ;  
When want and woe may feast and sing,  
And weary labour rest !

Now, from the hammer and the spade,  
The desk, the mart, are come  
All they who earn the hard-got bread  
For loving ones at home.

No earthly master's busy call  
May summon them away ;  
The husband and the father sits  
Among his own, this day.

Strong cords of love in innocence  
Shall bind around the hearth  
Soul unto soul, while face on face  
Sheds light of hallowed mirth.

The merry children's dancing feet,  
About the Christmas tree,  
Ring through the house from floor to roof  
With shouts of frolic glee.

And friends have met, from near, from far—  
From o'er the Western main  
The heir of broader fields than ours  
With joy is come again !

He tells of hope 'neath brighter suns,  
Where honest toil makes sure  
To win the riches of the earth,  
Where no man need be poor.

The wondering young ones gathered round,  
With greedy ears and eyes  
Hang on his words, and loud exclaim  
At every new surprise.

The mother's heart is full—her boy,  
Her eldest hope and pride,  
Is come with blessing to the nest,  
This happy Christmas tide !

The father tastes in joy secure  
The peace of his abode,  
For all their days have he and his  
In soberness served God.

## A PLEA FOR MERCY.

---

Who shall plead the cause of mercy  
To the speechless things of life,  
Sharers of our day of nature  
Where the seeds of death are rife?

Who that thrills with tender pity,  
Kind to all, embraces not  
In the common bond of feeling  
Those whom God has not forgot?

Not in vain to Him the ravens'  
And the lions' younglings call;  
Not without their great Creator  
May the unnoted sparrows fall.

When our father Adam named them  
And received them to his use,  
He was made their lord, to spare them  
From oppression's vile abuse.

In one ark upon the waters  
    Floated every rescued race,  
Till the dove on silver pinion  
    Found for man a resting-place.

To the children of the Highest  
    Cometh down the Holy Dove,  
From the clouds of heaven opening  
    O'er His own in power and love,

That their hearts may burn to seek Him  
    And to know Him as He is,  
Tender unto every creature,  
    Offspring all alike of His.



A  
TERRIBLE TALE OF THE SEA.

---

WE were but poor and common men, a shipwrecked crew  
of three,

Yet the world stood still when we came to tell our  
Terrible Tale of the Sea ;

Murder they called it—what we did—O God ! and if it  
were,

The pangs that tempted us were more than living flesh  
could bear.

And I must speak, or my heart would break, the stern  
and awful truth,

Though no tongue but mine accuse us men of the blood  
of that orphan youth.

Shall we be the last, and were we the first, to sin and  
suffer so ?

That the earth cries out to the sea, she has heard no  
story of such woe.

A simple and a common tale : our lives for bread were  
sold,  
To plough rough seas in a pleasure toy towards the  
Southern land of gold.  
May weather went with us down stream, as they towed  
her out to sea,  
And we made our course for Madeira isle, as fair as fair  
could be.

Four weeks were told from the day we shipped, and  
straight above, at noon,  
The sun shot down his fires on our heads from his throne  
of eternal June :  
The wild winds blew, the big seas lashed, and hid our  
little sail,  
But hope stood firm through the tempest's stress, so  
bravely she rode the gale.

The Captain bade heave-to for the night, and every inch  
was furled :  
Then rose the roar of a mighty wave straight down upon  
us hurled ;  
It passed ; with the grip of death upon life we drowning  
four held on,  
And the depths of waters heard our cry : " My God, her  
bulwarks gone."

With sides stove in she was sinking fast : we cut away  
a boat,  
Flung in our compass—and hoped our lives on the angry  
seas might float.  
Through God's high will they bore up 'neath the pall of  
the sudden dark,  
And we beat off Death when he called for his due by the  
jaws of the ravening shark.

The light came back and stirred again suspended nature's  
power,  
And woke us, lone in our hunger-pain, to the horror of  
the hour.  
Four days had gone—and a turtle gave his flesh to our  
hands for meat :  
And we shouted for joy 'neath the pleasant sun, and  
fought for the life that was sweet.

We were three strong men and a little lad, who moaned  
as his eyes grew dim :  
“ We shall soon see land,” ah ! too well we knew, but we  
said no word to him ;  
For we loved the boy, and down in the boat in pain-  
racked dreams he lay,  
And as long as we might, from his fading sight we hid  
our fears away.

When our cry went up for the tempest shower, and we  
    caught some drops of rain,  
On his baking lip, the precious sip we pressed again and  
    again.  
We count the days as we watch the sun : to left of our  
    course he dips  
In the far-off sea, and to west by north, we steer for the  
    track of the ships.

We stripped our backs for the wherewithal to rig our  
    boat with a sail,  
And we prayed out loud in a horror of dread when the  
    dying light grew pale :  
Oh, God ! those long, long hours of the dark, when  
    slumber mocked despair  
With broken dreams of a feverish feast—yet hunger men  
    can bear,

Not thirst, not thirst ! not even Thy Son, who died upon  
    the tree,  
Had parched thus long when He cried : “ My God, why  
    hast Thou forsaken me ? ”  
But once we quaffed the bitter draught of the rippling,  
    scornful wave,  
It burned like fire—yet there beneath lay peace in an  
    ocean grave.

No woman's tremors shook our hearts that we should  
shrink for fear ;  
'Twas for love of wife and tender babes the life God  
gave was dear.  
Days grew to weeks, till flesh and strength had fallen  
clean away :  
The sunk eyes gleamed from living forms that rotted in  
death's decay.

We looked each other in the face as in a hideous  
glass,  
Where Cain's curs'd spirit bade each man behold the  
thing he was.  
I cannot tell of how it fell, for horror and for shame—  
How men go mad like famished beasts—and to that pass  
we came.

I'd rend in twain this throbbing brain to forget it, if I  
could !  
How we looked upon the dying boy and thirsted for his  
blood.  
He had drunk by night of the false, salt sea, whose  
poison burned in his veins ;  
And a helpless groaning heap he lay on the rack of his  
fever pains.

We heard him cry, "We all shall die"—and the Captain  
muttered, 'Twere best  
Draw lots, for 'twas hard that four should go, when one  
might save the rest.  
"We will die together," cried one and all; and he  
answered, "So let it be;"  
But he whispered that night: "There are wives and  
babes to weep for you and me ;

And the boy is dying."—At break of day, no sail to bid  
us live :  
And the Captain prayed with a wild, hoarse cry: "O  
God above, forgive."  
We hid our faces, and shrunk away, with horror stricken  
dumb :  
But we knew he said 'to the orphan lad : "Richard, your  
time is come."

"What, me, sir?" "Yes, my son"—we heard, and  
knew what thing was done,  
And the sounds in our ears, like drops of fire, fell slowly,  
one by one.  
A moment stopped his innocent breath, he did not cry,  
nor strive,  
And, as the gushing life-blood streamed—enough—I am  
alive.

Ask me no more ! we have spoken truth, and earned the  
ban of crime :

The law's slow torture bids us yet once more pass  
through that time—

That time of hell !—Can man compel from man such tale  
of woe ?

While Mercy, shuddering, veils her face, and weeping,  
bids us Go !

FOR  
ENGLAND AND THE RIGHT

(*April, 1878.*)

---

BRITONS, stirred at last to anger  
By the boast of tyrant might,  
Wake the trumpet's martial clangour,  
Cry, "For England and the right!"

Men of Britain, stand united  
All at one against the Russ ;  
Till the oppressor's wrong be righted,  
Till the despot bend to us.

Idly has his fury vaunted  
"Hearts of oak" decay in you ;  
Still Old England lives undaunted,  
Still her mettle's iron-true.

Still a race her soil inherit  
Glad to die for duty's sake ;  
Still they bear the quenchless spirit  
Of her Nelson and her Blake.



Shall we see the Cossack tread on  
Right of ours, submitting tame ?  
While the hosts of Armageddon  
Cover earth with blood and shame ?

Never, till this land of Britain  
Sink beneath her guardian sea,  
Till her story pause unwritten  
At thy death-shriek, Liberty !

Never, till we fall, divided,  
From the living truth of God ;  
Till a foeman's foot has bided,  
Undisturbed, on Albion's sod.

Dare the world to pluck asunder  
Freedom's heirs arisen in might ;  
Lift a people's voice of thunder,  
England ! God defend the right !

# VICTORIA VICTRIX.

(*June, 1878.*)

---

“WHY should England seek for allies?  
But let England do the right,  
Freedom’s host around her rallies,  
Armed with truth and heavenly light.

“Peace, if peace may stand with honour,  
Be our prayer and heart’s desire;  
But if Russia bring upon her  
War and havoc, sword and fire,

“England will not pause from slaughter  
Till her rival, crushed and dumb,  
Drink of bitter shame like water,  
All resistance overcome.”

Thus an oracle hath spoken  
Forth the voice of England’s brave;  
Thus her heroes’ souls have broken  
Through the silence of the grave.

Lives Old England's spirit only  
In a woman's bosom now,  
Though in widowed sorrow lonely  
Droops that golden-rounded brow?

Yet we have a Queen in Britain,  
And these words of truth among  
England's annals shall be written  
In the marble of our tongue.

Lightning-wingèd speeds the answer  
From the children of the morn,  
'Neath the blood-fierce heat of Cancer  
To the battle bred and born.

By the Lion creeps the Tiger,  
With the leash about his neck;  
For the battle panting eager,  
Lo! he spurns against the check.

England knows no hand unsteady  
East and West could thus unite;  
Ready so, ay, ever ready,  
Britons stand upon their right!

# FREDERICK GUSTAVUS BURNABY.

---

WHERE the wellsprings of sweet water  
Pierce Bayuda's sandy sea,  
Surges up the sound of slaughter  
Hushed by shouts of victory !

England strikes a blow for empire  
O'er the farthest south and east,  
'Gainst the life-devouring vampire,  
Slavery's fanatic priest :

'Gainst that false and perjured prophet  
We are but a handful, flung  
For his dusky hordes to scoff at  
With the arrows of the tongue.

Like a locust-cloud dark gathering  
Sweeps the countless desert host  
O'er the scared earth's bosom, withering  
All that breathes or lives, almost :

Halt and form ! our lost twelve hundred  
Side to side closed in their square,  
While the fierce Arabian wondered  
What destruction men may dare.

Down on us, now hid, now springing  
Like a fountain from beneath,  
On they plunge, with weapons swinging,  
Lance from rest and sword from sheath.

Down upon our lost twelve hundred  
Through our leaden hail they close,  
Pierce, and break our line, outnumbered  
Ten to one, by gallant foes.

Saxon pluck, by no disaster  
Taught to yield, at handgrips met  
Death, and bade him know a master,  
Matching spear with bayonet.

Dear the cost ! while backward speeding,  
Baffled, spent, the Bedouin flee,  
'Neath the stroke of battle bleeding,  
Down sinks gallant Burnaby.

Never, bred for Britain's glory,  
Grander height or statelier girth,  
'Mong her sons of ancient story  
Moved a giant on the earth.

Who shall whisper Erin's daughter?  
Who shall smite her with a word  
Sharper than the spear—how slaughter  
Fell upon her soldier-lord?

Though in joy and pride he won her,  
Though he loved fair Erin's child,  
From her side by radiant Honour  
Were the warrior's steps beguiled:

Who with hungering eye had sought him  
For his manhood's martial grace,  
Till that fatal morn she caught him  
In a wild and last embrace.

In the grand old English fashion,  
In the ecstasy of strife,  
Fade the ruddy hues to ashen,  
Ebbs away the noble life.

God knows best—no fairer portal  
Could release the heroic soul  
With the wreath of praise immortal  
Crowned triumphant at the goal.

Happier thus, ere daily wasting  
Slow consume the life and breath,  
Till the spirit languish, tasting  
All the bitterness of death.

By a strange, mysterious boding,  
Long that gallant spirit knew  
Death impatient, ever goading  
Valour to attempt and do.

Sure, most sure, in days of nature  
Briefer than our common time,  
Must that soul achieve her stature,  
Perfected in youth sublime.

As the jewel from the casket,  
Light to higher light aspires ;  
Swift and bright as he would ask it,  
Fate fulfilled his heart's desires.

From the Eastern sea soft breathing,  
Shall the desert winds enfold  
Wave on wave of sand, enwreathing  
Heights above that goodly mould.

Of the battle and the slaughter,  
Fast by Abu Klea's spring,  
As they lead their flocks to water  
Shall the Arab shepherds sing :

And the story shall be written  
On the page that cannot die,  
On the lip and heart of Britain :  
Thus fell gallant Burnaby !

## GORDON.

---

OH, the wail of wrath and woe !  
Oh, too late was struck the blow  
For our hero lying low,  
Gordon left alone to die !

Now may England veil her face  
'Neath the "indelible disgrace,"  
He, the noblest of her race,  
Boded with despairing cry.

Hope might perish, nature faint,  
Yet the soldier and the saint  
Bore aloft without a taint  
England's banner of the free.

Great of heart, he went to save  
England's fame, and lift the slave  
From oppression's living grave,  
With the promise, Liberty !



Life, as 'twere a worthless thing,  
On the dust he dared to fling,  
Passing, like a warrior king,  
On through death to victory !

His the glory, ours the blame  
Of the attempt broke off with shame :  
Not with water, but with flame  
Flashes every English eye.

Bleeding honour bids us on,  
Till the grave thy arm has won  
Plant beneath the southern sun  
Freedom's ensign, leal and true.

There is hope yet, if we close,  
All as one man, to oppose  
Brother's vengeance 'gainst thy foes—  
Thus, with God's help, up and do !

## “VOX POPULI.”

---

Lo, a voice of power has spoken through the Islands of  
the sea,  
By the will of England's people making protest full and  
free—  
To the war-cry of disunion, to the fatal, feeble sound  
Of a whispered pact with treason, this the fitting answer  
found :

“We are Britons, men and brothers, many races blent  
in one ;  
We will hold the grand tradition of our might in union ;  
With the life that God has given, with the strength of  
heart and hand,  
We will do our whole endeavour not for self, but  
motherland.”

Such the fixed resolve of millions, in the proud, triumphant  
hour  
Of the lowly new uprisen, of the toilers sprung to  
power :

They have sense of England's honour, and the sturdy  
freemen scorn  
To desert the dear old Colours many a gallant son has  
borne.

Every landmark of oppression, relic of a darker day,  
Could the arm of Britain's manhood waved in thunder  
sweep away ;  
What could gold avail, or reverence, or the trembling  
statesman's skill,  
Crushed beneath the iron hammer of an angry people's  
will ?

Not for right to live and labour, not for ease to patient  
want,  
Do the many rise in battle 'gainst the classes dominant :  
"We will wait," they answer nobly, "rather bar our  
righteous claim,  
Than consent to foes within us, 'gainst our nation's peace  
and fame."

Such the men who built an Empire in our farthest island  
home ;  
Such the will that baffled Cæsar's, and defied the arms  
of Rome ;  
Such the bowmen of our forests, such the shipmen stout  
and bold,  
Rovers free of ocean's pathways, of whose valour bards  
have told.

Such a band with their boy-hero bled at Crécy and  
Poictiers ;\*

Such have stood and strove undaunted in the fatal  
adverse day

When the stars have fought against them, till they steeled  
their hearts to meet

Pale despair and death as comrades, for they would not  
own defeat.

These are worthy to be trusted with the birth-right of the  
free,

These who eat the bread of labour, heirs of broader days  
to be :

Bid them welcome, lords and princes, own them brothers  
leal and true :

This is noblest in the noblest—deal as God has dealt with  
you.

May the love of Queen and people wipe the tears and  
crimson stain

From the drooping face of Erin, till our sister smile  
again ;

May her foes, and ours, be scattered, and the whole world  
understand

We are one, from earth-born peasant to the Lady of the  
land !

\* Poictiers, as in French, to rhyme with day.

## MERCEDES.

(*July, 1878.*)

---

“THE fair young Queen is dead.” No sharper word  
Has Fate to utter in a monarch’s ear ;  
Nothing in life beyond that cry, once heard,  
Remains to hope or fear.

Woe, woe ! upon the land of golden skies  
The stroke of Heaven hath fall’n in scathful fire !  
Spain’s Prince and people bow with weeping eyes  
For loss of their desire.

So young, so rich in joy and beauty—dead !  
Oh, God ! the morrow of her natal day ;  
With bridal wreath unfaded on her head,  
Clay has returned to clay !

But yesterday fond lovers, heart in heart,  
Knit by the holy band of marriage ring,  
Thou and thy five months’ wife thought not to part  
So soon—to-day, O King !

Borne to the dim Escorial vault, beneath  
The fatal gate, corruption shall destroy  
Love's flower and fruit—the stern cold rival, Death,  
Possess thy dearest joy !

There, withering, the half-blown Rose of Spain  
Waits for her love—not lost, but gone before—  
In God's own garden ye shall meet again,  
Where pain shall be no more.

O! live the worthier, for thou hast been blest !  
Thy country be thy bride ! Thy pleasures now  
In a great people's happiness ! So best  
Youth's sorrow crowns man's brow.

# THE PRINCESS ALICE.

(December, 1878.)

---

GONE to her father ! through the winter snows,  
His voice from heaven has called her : “ Alice, come !  
This day I left thee, come, my child, to those  
Who live in God’s own home.”

Pale sorrow from the rising of the sun  
Dimmed all his course o’er England’s realms that day,  
Whose cry of anguish mourned their noblest one,  
Scarce known till ta’en away.

For she loved much ; sweet love on earth is pain,  
Mingling brief ecstasy with many a tear ;  
Life lost for what it loves the heart counts gain  
Whose treasure is not here.

She who received her father’s parting sigh,  
And wrung from death her brother’s soul by prayer,  
Spent o’er the wounded soldiers’ agony  
Her tender woman’s care,

Forgot her own in sense of others' pangs,  
And, while her husband strove for fatherland,  
With dire disease and fever's silent fangs  
She fought for her own hand !

The grave remembered her, and claimed his part,  
A lamb of her fair flock, her youngest joy,  
Whose brother's grief o'ercame her—on her heart  
Too rash, she clasped her boy !

Death wooed her tenderly in that fond kiss  
Of mutual sorrow for their eyes' desire ;  
Thus her pure soul went forth to meet in bliss  
Albert the Good, her sire.

Their lives were lovely—those whom God loves most  
Belong not to our day ; earth borroweth  
The fairest gems of heaven, too early lost,  
Unseparate in death !



## THE LIVING GOLD.

---

SPOKE the lord of many lands  
To a lady wondrous fair :  
“Say, did young Aurora’s hands  
Spin the day-beams for thy hair?  
Glory pales to shadows cold  
In their tender light of love,  
And their mesh of living gold  
Through and through my heart hath wove.

“In my bitter days of life,  
Sweet my bride, thy golden head  
O’er the toils of power and strife  
One blest influence hath shed,  
Soothed to peace my troubled breast—  
Locks of love, ah ! when I die  
Deeper peace should seal my rest  
Could ye in my coffin lie.”

Came his words fulfilled in death ;

And that hair he loved so well,

Her despairing hand beneath,

Woman's crowning glory fell.

Love that fails not to the dead,

'Neath the marble pale and cold,

In the pillow for his head

Laid those locks of living gold.

# PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

(*October 4th, 1881.*)

---

FROM the Royal seat of England  
Tender words for human pain  
Span the earth on wings of lightning,  
Pierce the wind-swept Western Main,

Tell them in that house of sorrow  
Where they mourn their slaughtered chief,  
England's Queen, indeed a widow,  
Hath a portion in their grief.

From the hour the death-stroke touched him,  
Days, weeks, months of pangs untold,  
While the undaunted spirit wrestled  
With corruption's serpent fold.

Many a loving wife among us  
Thrilled in sympathy with one  
Ever near her husband's pillow,  
Hoping—though she hoped alone.

Hers the woe no thought can measure  
Nor the tongue's faint language tell,  
But the widowed heart of England  
Bleeds for sorrows known too well.

To his God, the Christian warrior,  
Fearless, yields the immortal breath,  
More than conqueror, unmastered  
By the bitter pains of death.

Of such heroes earth unworthy  
Sees their light with dazzled eyes,  
Till they sink to rest in glory,  
By their God-like sacrifice.

While the heavens bow down to meet him,  
Bleeding from the murderer's hand,  
Both worlds shall rejoice that sorrow  
Bound them with a triple band.

# LILIAN ADELAIDE NEILSON.

(*September, 1880.*)

---

GONE to thy rest so early ! Has the rose  
Drooped on the stem, and yielded her sweet breath ?  
Art thou no more, O fairest, but as those  
Who fade in clay-cold death ?

Fame's burning lamp shone proudly on thy head  
But yesterday—now withered in thy bloom,  
The world's heart turns to sorrow for thee, dead  
And laid into the tomb.

Thrice dear the laurel round the brow of youth !  
By thy warm eloquent art thou hadst the spell  
To set before our eyes in living truth  
The saint-like Isabel,

And wifely Imogen ; and the true faith  
Of Juliet, mystery of joy and woe,  
Who, living, dared the sepulchre's foul breath  
For her loved Romeo.

Ten golden years of triumph, in the light  
Of the world's glory, and thy tale is told ;  
Closed are those wondrous eyes, before the night  
When patient grief grows old.

Great silence fills thy place that knows thee not :  
Grace, beauty, passion, genius, have their day,  
But Shakespeare's child, a vision unforget,  
Can never pass away.

# A GOOD PHYSICIAN.

IN MEMORIAM, FRANCIS GOODCHILD.

(*March*, 1883.)

---

THOUGH early dead, he has not lived in vain  
Who earned kind thoughts from those who knew him  
best,  
The weary watchers by the bed of pain,  
Where hope came with him as a welcome guest.

As with unwearying step and quiet calm  
He went upon his round from door to door,  
His cheering words and pleasant ways left balm  
To ease the sorrowful, the sick, the poor.

This was his mission—now the bow o'erwrought,  
That bore so long, has broken on the strain ;  
Hundreds of eyes are dimmed, and tongues have naught  
But praise for him.—Is such a death no gain ?

Ay, for how few they are whose mortal years  
    Shall live, prolonged by memories so sweet ;  
The children ask for him, who soothed their fears,  
    And drew their little steps about his feet.

And now the toiler rests from labour—deep  
    The slumber falls upon his painless breath ;  
The Lord of Life gives His beloved sleep,  
    To bid us know how beautiful is death.



## MR. WILSON BARRETT AS CLAUDIAN.

---

ART has its wonders, and the scenic glass  
Bent on the world's light fashions as they pass  
Can mirror noble lives of god-like men,  
When genius fires and nature guides the pen.  
The old heroic heights of tragic power  
Yield to the daring poets of the hour,  
And Claudian lives before us ! Earthly pride  
In strength, and wealth, and power, personified ;  
His scorn of others' woe, of living truth,  
The punishment he bore : eternal youth ;  
Repentance known too late, that fondly sought  
By doing good to atone for evil wrought,  
And self-abhorring 'neath the bitter cross :  
So, out of sin's corruption and foul dross,  
God's chastening hand draws forth the eternal gem,  
A soul redeemed to fill His diadem.  
So Claudian, the accurst, is taught to rise  
From brutish lust to pure self-sacrifice ;

Tempted and tried by women's dearest love,  
He rends his heart in twain, to seek above  
Pardon and peace, and smiling, tells pale Death :  
" I see—I know," and yields to God his breath.  
Such is the man who lives before our eyes—  
Sins, suffers, and repents, and grandly dies ;  
If this be art, this is the highest, best,  
That stirs the conscience in each human breast,  
Passing through passion up to truth sublime,  
The Drama's noblest image of our time.

## MORNING LIGHT.

---

(*For my Godchildren, DAISY and MAX.*)

---

FATHER, while my soul is white,  
Do Thou on my memory write  
Words of truth in morning light.

Thou whose praise the angels sung,  
When the stars on high were swung,  
Keep my heart and rule my tongue ;

That no false or cruel word  
From a breast with envy stirred  
On these lips be ever heard.

Earthly father, mother dear,  
With the angels watch me here,  
From all danger keep me clear.

Near Thy throne, with Thy dear Son,  
Suffer me, Thy little one,  
Ere my battle has begun.

Teach me, in my early day,  
How to trust Thee all my way,  
How to love and how to pray.

# WAT TYLER.

(A.D. 1381.)

---

O ENGLISH hearts, inclined  
To the weak against the strong,  
Will ye hear me, a Saxon woman,  
The child of an earth-born yeoman,  
Tell a tale of wrath and wrong?

We were sprung from the land's old race  
By the Norman dispossessed,  
But my sire was stout and brave;  
Of the measure of life God gave  
His hand would make the best.

Through Essex his smithy was known,  
In the days when Richard our King,  
That is slain so traitorously,  
Was a youth of like years with me,  
A maid in my flower of spring.

And the Royal boy was beloved  
As the great Black Prince's heir,  
Whose bride was the Maid of Kent,  
The pearl of our English descent—  
Joanna, the proud and fair.

But the cruel wars enforced  
Our tribute of blood and tears ;  
A tax was laid upon all  
The people, both great and small,  
From the age of fifteen years.

From each was the hard-earned coin  
Compelled ; but in sullen rage,  
My father, the sturdy smith,  
Refused my tribute, sith  
I was yet of tender age.

So the taxers bade me stand forth,  
And they judged me woman grown :  
I was tall of stature, and lithe  
As the bending willow withe  
By the breath of the morning blown.

I felt a rough, rude hand  
That was twisted in my hair ;  
My kerchief plucked off ; and then  
To the gaze and scorn of men  
Did they show my bosom bare.

They mocked my writhing shame  
And the scarlet flush of my cheek ;  
That the cry of curdling blood  
From the heart of my womanhood  
Went up in one bitter shriek.

There was help in the strong right hand,  
Revenge in the eyes afire :  
The blur of my womanhood  
That instant was washed in blood  
By the mighty smith, my sire.

One stroke of his hammer came down  
And smote the ruffian dead ;  
I fell on his bosom, safe :  
I felt his fingers chafe  
My hot and sinking head.

Like the hop-vine 'bout the pole  
Her creeping clusters flings,  
The sweep of my hair unbound  
In fiery flashes round  
My father's body clings.

The people's voice rose up  
With a ringing cheer, " Well done ! "  
The lion was roused, and woke  
At the fall of that hammer's stroke  
With a roar of revolt begun.

“To arms !” cry the men of Kent ;  
    “ No tyrants shall crush us down ! ”  
Like waves of fire borne hither,  
From the north and east they gather  
    To march on London town.

My father, the dauntless smith,  
    On that sea of wrath was borne ;  
I clung to his bosom, fast  
As the shipboy to the mast  
    From the wave-swept wreckage torn.

Full many a barbarous deed  
    I, shuddering, saw that hour,  
When the surge from the earth uprose  
O'er the God-forsaken foes  
    That were left in the people's power.

The noble had spurned the wolf  
    While he crouched behind the door ;  
But now, o'er a land of death  
The proud lay strewn beneath  
    The vengeance of the poor.

That time, on a pilgrimage  
    To Canterbury went  
A widow and sorrowing,  
The mother of the King,  
    She who was the Fair Maid of Kent.

She who was the rose of love  
On the breast of our gallant Black Prince,  
Our hope death-stricken so young ;  
Ah, woe ! for the havoc and wrong  
That have vexed fair England since !

Our tryst was on Blackheath ;  
One hundred thousand there  
Had swelled to a rabble rout,  
That thundered with threatening shout  
At sight of that Princess fair.

Through their midst she was fain to pass  
With her maids, and her henchmen true  
To shield her from treason's breath ;  
But the crowd rose strong as death  
And o'erbore those faithful few.

Then, sturdy and overbold,  
Wat Tyler seized her waist :  
The cheek whose roseate bloom  
Had drooped o'er Edward's tomb  
The ruffian strove to taste.

She turned and faced her fear,  
Her dove-like eyes aflame ;  
" I was Edward's wife," she said,  
" For the sake of our hero dead  
Let me perish untouched by shame !"



Then my father, the gallant smith,  
Fell low upon his knee :  
“My life for your name and fame ;  
Is not virtue in Queens the same  
As in maidens of low degree ?

“But say you are of one blood  
With the children of want and toil.  
On my forehead’s grime and sweat,  
You, lady, lips may set,  
Unscathed by taint or soil.”

Kneeling, he kisses her hand,  
And she stooped her queenly height ;  
Her sweet lips did him grace,  
For in my father’s face  
Spoke the heart of a loyal knight.

Harmless, he bore her through  
From the wrathful people’s power ;  
One moment he stemmed the flood,  
Whose fury unwithstood  
Swept onwards to the Tower.

A hell of blood and fire  
Broke forth and drank its fill,  
Till the awful stones were red,  
And many a lordly head  
Had fallen to the cry, “ Kill, kill ! ”

Wat Tyler, the rebel chief,  
Trode London 'neath his heel ;  
'Twas then the King rode forth,  
To sweep him off the earth  
With knightly arm of steel.

Heroic Edward's son  
Rose at the godless band,  
And fury armed his youth  
To chase and kill without ruth  
The wolf from off the land.

Wat Tyler slain at his feet,  
Avenged a mother's fears :  
There was death in the wrathful groan  
Of the crowd—till Richard, alone,  
Came forth to the mutineers.

“ My people,” the sovereign spake,  
“ What means this murmuring ?  
Are ye vexed for your leader dead ?  
Nay, I'll be your leader, your head,  
Your chief—I am your King ! ”

And of his Royal grace,  
He restored our ancient laws,  
Our liberties—our rights—  
With pardon to each who fights  
Upon that sacred cause.

He is dead by our tyrants' hands—

But his deeds shall never die,  
Till manhood, broken tame,  
Set light by England's fame  
In her women's purity.

## CASSANDRA.

*(Founded on the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus.)*

---

A LIGHT of glory o'er the purple seas  
Furrows the waters of the Cyclades ;  
Lo, westward, in Hyperion's radiant track,  
A tall-prowed ship towards Argos bearing back  
The conqueror, Agamemnon, King of men,  
Who through the summer heat of harvests ten  
Wearied and bled before the walls of Troy  
Now level with the dust ; so, with great joy  
Homeward he steers, possessed of his desire,  
Or ere the midday glow of passion's fire  
Had 'bated of its strength, or 'gun to wane  
'Neath the cold touch of age or stress of pain.  
'Midst spoil past count, the riches of his ship,  
Captive Cassandra sits, with quivering lip,  
Shrinking beneath his gaze for shame, and ruth  
To know and utter the abhorred truth.

## I. 1.

AGAMEMNON.

Look in my eyes that plead with thee ;  
Give me thy heart, mine own, be not afraid  
Of Love, whose arrows wounded me  
With yearning after my prophetic maid.  
Why dost thou shrink and start so wild ?

CASSANDRA.

Am I not slaughtered Priam's child ?  
To what dark fate dost lead me forth, O King ?

AGAMEMNON.

To love and honour, everything  
Thy dearest wish can dream of.

CASSANDRA.

Say'st thou so ?

Nay, rather in the depth of woe,  
Treacherous snare and bloody grave,  
Blindly thou fall'st, and I—must follow thee, thy slave.

## I. 2.

AGAMEMNON.

Priestess, what art thou raving of ?  
My royal palace shall thy temple be.  
Can I forget the taste of love  
Alone with thee upon the lonely sea ?

CASSANDRA.

Can I forget the awful light  
Kindling our nuptial torch that night,  
When thou and I by fraud and force were wed?  
When Furies strewed our marriage bed  
Upon the smouldering ashes of my home?  
I saw my wretched mother come,  
A corpse-like form, down to the sea,  
To shriek a wild farewell and look her last on me.

I. 3.

AGAMEMNON.

Cannot my love and sovereign sway  
Charm harsh memories away?  
Hath not the envied name of wife  
Knit thee to thy master's life?

CASSANDRA.

And will the gods forget  
That hideous spousal, nor my wrong repay?  
My prayer for vengeance though my lip unsay,  
Their justice will accomplish yet;  
Though I be humbled, tame,  
Yielding to pardon shame,  
And all my being cling  
In sorrow for thy fate to thee, my King!  
Why didst thou spare to slay  
Me, hallowed maid, nor suffer me to rest

With godlike Hector, and fair Paris, whom  
To love was mortal doom ?

Lo, here I cast my crown away,  
And rend the sacred robe upon my breast,  
Thus, thus upon the scattering whirlwind driven,  
Perish this once pure form, by murder rent and riven !

## II. 1.

AGAMEMNON.

Thou canst not sever from my fate  
By augury of evil-boding breath ;  
Thee will I hold, my chosen mate,  
In love's strong fetters, or in bonds of death.  
Lives there within my subject land  
The man can wrest thee from my hand ?

CASSANDRA.

Woe worth the day ! ah, whither do we go ?  
Not to thy royal home, no, no !  
Mock not the gods, nor make the queen thy wife  
The keeper of thy days of life ;  
For woman's love and hate are strong  
To breed prolific hate and answer wrong with wrong.

## II. 2.

AGAMEMNON.

Come not her name between us ! Let  
Fond trust outweigh thy fantasy o'erwrought ;  
Why dost thou strive within the net  
Limed like a bird, a wild thing newly caught ?

CASSANDRA.

Wilt lure me with deceitful vows  
Into that human slaughter-house,  
Where thy forsaken lioness has lain  
With the foul wolf, until they twain  
Are one in guilt, and she makes sharp the sword  
A woman, 'gainst her wedded lord ;  
Thee, thee, my master, will she smite,  
Yea, for my bringing home with thrusts of steel requite !

II. 3.

AGAMEMNON.

Have I not power on thee, my thrall,  
I, who chose thee, best of all  
Triumphant Grecia's home-bound fleet  
Cast before her leader's feet !  
Art thou not radiant fair,  
That spurned the sun-god's love ? Shall I forego  
My will and pleasure, I, the King, who know  
Thy beauty worth the world I dare !

CASSANDRA.

Woe, woe ! within thy gate  
Thou leadest me, thy Fate ;  
By retribution strange  
I follow thee, a Fury to avenge  
The slaughter of my race ;  
Victorious, among my foes I come,  
Urged by the gods, a weapon to fulfil  
Their curse, against my will.



Wouldst thou the child of death embrace,  
Suck aspic's poison in the kiss of love?  
Nay, cast me to the shades beneath, for I  
Am last of Priam's blood, and I too dare to die!

## III. 1.

AGAMEMNON.

Live, live, sweet guest! to bring delight  
Like warmth in winter to thy master's hearth,  
And pay with jocund hours of mirth  
Ten wasted years of toil and desperate fight;  
Bid me forget the past, to sip  
The future on thy glowing lip!

CASSANDRA.

Oh, thou wilt not believe me! foe and friend  
Reject my warning to the end!  
My cry of horror for the woes hereafter  
Provokes thy scorn and mocking laughter;  
In vain some strange, relenting charm  
Asks my last drop of blood to shield thy life from harm.

## III. 2.

What fire of doom has lit mine eye?  
A woman's hand, false and adulterous,  
As prey for slaughter meshes us—  
Not without honour from the gods we die!  
To thee I pray, all glorious sun  
I nevermore shall look upon,

By this, for me, thy last, last sinking light,  
On my foul murderers requite  
Mine, a slave's death, with his, I mourn and pity  
Far, far beyond my native city ;  
For death to misery is kind,  
And thou from kingly state fall'st like the deaf and  
blind !

## III. 3.

Closed were her lips, the awful weird  
Glanced upon his ear unfeared ;  
While through the thickening dark of night  
Torches flashed from height to height  
The tale of victory  
O'er fallen Troy ; from Ida's loftiest peak  
The news did mountain unto mountain speak  
By fire across th' Ægean sea ;  
Till Argos saw, amazed,  
And Clytemnestra gazed  
Upon the heavens ashine  
With beacon flames, and knew the appointed sign.  
Her smooth, caressing tongue  
Could rouse the sleeping Furies on their prey ;  
While blinded Agamemnon by her side  
Walked like a god in pride,  
Her arms about his neck she flung  
To hide the steel her hand had clutched to slay.  
Troy's daughter died avenged : from out one grave  
Their blood cried up to heaven, the King beside his  
slave.

## PUDENS AND CLAUDIA.

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Under the reign of Nero, A.D. 57, Pomponia Græcina, wife of Aulus Plautius—who, upon his return from Britain, entered the city in ovation—was accused of “foreign superstition,” and committed to the judgment of her husband and family, who pronounced her innocent. She lived many years, wearing no habit but mourning, and in continual sadness, which ultimately redounded to her honour. (Tacitus, *Annales*, lib. XIII., ch. xxxii.)

Claudia, wife of Aulus Pudens, was a British princess connected by family ties with Pomponia Græcina. (2 Timothy iv. 21.)

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### POMPONIA.

AND is it thou, my daughter, that art fain  
To weep in loving arms? What aileth thee,  
Blest as a wife and mother? In thy pain  
Why dost thou seek me?

### CLAUDIA.

My husband—Aulus—from my soul is torn  
By Nero's ruthless hand—condemned to lie  
Beneath the arena's pit of blood till morn—  
Ay, and he must die!

## POMPONIA.

A blessed martyr ! Shall thy heart despair,  
Yielding thy treasure unto God in faith ?  
Your souls are one in Him—immortal pair,  
Why should ye fear death ?

## CLAUDIA.

Come, Death, take both together—oh, my heart !  
Life without him—'tis more than I can bear !  
Entreat our Father that we may not part ;  
Pity me—make prayer.

## POMPONIA.

Nay, leave it in His hands, nor death nor life  
Can part ye long ; but I have lived estranged  
Beneath my husband's roof, no more his wife,  
Parted, and heart-changed.

My hero—how I worshipped him ! Too fond,  
My life's one passion to its idol clove ;  
God had not joined us in an equal bond :  
That is the true love.

The light from heaven he knew not ; cold and blind,  
My joy he loathed, my hope he could not see,  
But heard the slanderer's tongue, the evil mind,  
Testify 'gainst me.

CLAUDIA.

But did he not absolve thee, when thy home  
Was turned to a tribunal, and thy kin,  
For worship alien to the gods of Rome,  
Charged thee with strange sin?

POMPONIA.

His lip was bold and faithful to proclaim  
Mine innocence, and from the lion's tooth  
Keep my pure body, and restore my name  
Tainted for God's truth.

The foes of mine own house he held at bay ;  
My life and fame were safe within his door :  
But ever since that unforgotten day,  
Saw'st thou me smile more ?

CLAUDIA.

True, true, thou liv'st a martyr, saint of God !  
Though they had torn my body limb by limb,  
I could have borne 't, resisting unto blood,  
So they had spared him,

My soul's beloved—on the day I stood,  
A trembling captive, by my father's side,  
In yon dread forum—he, the brave, the good,  
Chose me his strange bride,

A British maid, the spoil of Roman swords,  
The conquered daughter of Caraetacus :—  
They thrill my ears e'en now, the few sweet words  
Whispered between us.

Was all in vain ? My father's overthrow,  
My country's chains ? Would God that Britain's  
shore

Had bounded in our mingled lives, to know  
Never desire more,

Beyond the beauty of the sea and land,  
And Nature's treasures there so richly given,  
It seemed as if the great Creator's hand  
Made of our earth, heaven.

POMPONIA.

Hast thou forgot, thou comest of a race  
Foredoomed of Heaven to rise by truth sublime  
O'er heathen Rome triumphant, in her place  
Chosen for all time ?

Know'st not the daughter of a King thou art,  
Whose spirit taught the Roman to revere  
The captive 'neath his foot, too great of heart  
Ever to see fear ?

No iron chain could bind him—was't for naught  
A Briton looked on Cæsar's face unawed ?  
Dwelt 'mongst his foes in honour, and was taught  
Wisdom to see God ?

He bears the message of no earthly Lord  
To Britain's utmost verge, with mastery  
O'er fate and passion, mightier than the sword,  
Setting the soul free.

Thou art his child; and if thy heart of woman,  
Plucked from its roots of love, be cast, alone,  
God's chosen weapon 'gainst the fierce-browed Roman,  
Why should'st thou make moan?

## CLAUDIA.

O God, our time of joy—our wedded home  
Upon Thy earth the happiest and most blest,  
Where all Thy children in this awful Rome  
Clustered and found rest!

Our dear, dear home, where never breath of strife  
Troubled our love's first fragrance, since we clung,  
Strong tree, frail flower, the husband and the wife,  
Together, both young.

Graft to a stem of heroes, I have borne  
To thee, mine own, most fair and precious fruit  
Of lovely children—who shall help us, torn  
Off from our lives' root?

Ah blind! that day thy god-like kinsman, Paul,  
By Nero's bloodhounds from our hearth was reft,  
I thought not we should hear that dreadful call:  
One taken—one left!

## POMPONIA.

Women have looked upon the sons they bore  
Dying in torment, and the mother's voice  
Has bade their quivering flesh endure the more,  
Whispering of heaven's joys.

## CLAUDIA.

But I am weak—my grief will cry and strive—  
O Father! can I be Thy child forgiven,  
Most miserable now of things that live,  
Happiest, yestereven?

## POMPONIA.

Endure and conquer! 'neath the stroke that mars  
The beauty of your lives, canst thou not trust  
Thy darling to the hand that made the stars,  
Passing, as man must,

Through nature's anguish to the light eterne;  
Yet flashing back to earth from heaven a ray  
Of quenchless hope that evermore shall burn,  
Making the night day?

And though a sharper sword than death shall sever  
One flesh of God united, ask not what  
Thy bleeding heart shall rest on—but for ever  
Trust Him, and fear not!



CLAUDIA.

I would do so—look, look ! the morning sun—

I hear the cry for blood—the lions' roar—

The hour is come—my true and loving one—

Never to meet more !

It cannot be—the light of day turns dim—

The ice of death with life's hot current wars

Curdling about my heart—each shuddering limb

Sinks like a dead corse !

POMPONIA.

Claudia, come back ! Dost hear ? A cry of doom

Rouses the city's sleep—lift up thy head,

Thy husband lives—the curse has passed from Rome :

Nero is dead !

CLAUDIA.

Dead !

# THE CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

*(Founded on the Picture by Paul Delaroche.)*

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As the world's dread lord, in earth's highest place,  
Sat the last of the Cæsars' Imperial race,

Domitian—o'er a sea of blood  
In the face of heaven and earth he stood,  
And lifted his head as Lord and God.

With heart of hate and with trembling limb  
Men kissed the dust as they worshipped him.

The pomp and lust of his golden home  
Were fed by the noblest beauty of Rome,

And maid and wife, at his beck and call,  
Of the whole world's fairest were gathered all,

While Roman husband and sire stood, tame,  
By the death of honour, and knew no shame.

And yet, beneath his all-licensed power  
One radiant girl, like an opening flower,

In her pure and heavenly beauty sprung,  
And wisdom, strange in one so young ;  
All the glory and pride of her princely birth  
Were accounted as naught to her own true worth.

Sweet Julia ! those were days of joy  
When we grew together as girl and boy,  
Till with a power thou knew'st not of,  
Thy charms, unconscious, around me wove .  
The deep mysterious spells of love.

And mine was the crown of earthly bliss  
To seal thee with the betrothal kiss,

Thy lover Claudius : even now,  
With sinking heart and shooting brow  
I can hear afar her murmured vow.

Of my wondrous chance, of her beauty's fame,  
To Cæsar's court the rumour came ;

On his weary throne Domitian heard  
With quickening pulses, envy-stirred,

And longings seized him to feed his eye  
On the loveliest form in Italy.

A shriek of 'wildered pain and affright  
Went up to heaven at dead of night,

Then Julia bows her head to weep  
Like some wild creature surprised in sleep,  
And through her pulses pale shudderings creep.

By fraud and force the maid o'erecome,  
Is borne before the tyrant of Rome ;

The lust and menace of his eye  
She meets with answer : " I dare to die."

But who shall answer the slanderous blur  
Of a whispered breath that hath tainted her ?

With a lover's passion jealous, rash,  
I saw her writhe 'neath the false tongues' lash,  
And to snatch her pure from the serpent's hiss,  
I found, despairing, no way but this :

" We are Christians, Cæsar, she and I :  
We will pass through death to liberty."  
So I spoke to Domitian, eye to eye.

The people heard—and a mighty yell  
" To the lions !" broke from the mouth of hell

Where the awful walls and pillars stood  
Round the sands compact with human blood,

Where the slaughter of men makes common sport  
For the Roman rabble and Roman court,

And their women's eyes o'er the feast of gore  
Burn fierce with joy, as the surge and roar  
Of the many thousands rise up for " more !"

As in the valley of death I stand,  
With my promised bride, on the fatal sand,

Methinks I sweep with searching eye  
From tier to tier, where safe and high,  
The broadening circles met the sky,

And wave above wave, the whole vast space  
Was filled like a sea with the human face.

As the whirlpool clutches the sinking ship  
They hurled their prey to the lion's grip ;

Then close to Julia's side I clung,  
And horror and pity loosed my tongue

To plead for mercy : "Set her free ;  
Unbar your lions' dens on me !"

She lifted her eyes to Cæsar's seat,  
And their speechless prayers for my life entreat—

His muttered whisper swift replies :  
"Both may live yet—thou know'st the price."

She knew—I saw her white cheek flush  
With the virgin blood's indignant rush—

A crash of iron—a sudden spring—  
And my limbs stood locked and shuddering ;

A lion faced me with sullen roar,  
And bristling hairs attaint with gore ;

I knew his hungry eyes on mine,  
And the eager arch of his quivering spine—

Beneath his deadly rush we fell—  
And what came after, I cannot tell—

I felt the monster sniff and stir,  
And with my body I shielded her.

We were left for dead together, till  
The stars bore witness, calm and still,  
Of man's fierce lust to rend and kill.

The lion had spared her—the hot sand's thirst  
Was slaked from my veins by the keen teeth pierced!

She rose to her feet at my living cry,  
And called the Christians watching nigh  
To comfort the victims to live or die.

Like the wretch exhausted on the rack  
I had dreamed of succour—she came not back—

I was found, alive, on the blood-steeped sands,  
And borne away by pitying hands;

But of her they knew not—as in a dream,  
I wandered down by the Tiber's stream—

Upborne and lifted from my bed  
Whither hope's delirious fancy led—

And lo! beneath pale Hesper's gleam,  
White shadows drifting down the stream—

I knew her face by the halo shed  
Above the virgin martyr's head—

I saw it all—Domitian found  
His victim 'scaped, and she was drowned  
By his revenge—her hands were bound.

I, Claudius, paid him ! Is 't need to tell  
By what slave's death Domitian fell ?

The scourge of God, the curse of Rome,  
Domestic treason compassed his doom ;  
But this was the hand that struck him home !

## EZEKIEL.

(Ch. xxiv., v. 16.)

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### EZEKIEL.

No more ! for I am man—the God of heaven  
Has shivered at a stroke my cup of bliss ;  
No word of her, my wife who died last even,  
No look—no parting kiss:

For I must do a hard and dread command,  
And utter forth a voice in words of fire  
Out of my heart, bruised by His heavy hand  
Who took my eyes' desire.

Be the cold earth a pillow for her head  
Warm from my breast, my bride of yester-year,  
Reft with the promise of our marriage bed—  
And I must shed no tear !

### AN ELDER OF ISRAEL.

O son ! what means that awful look of stone ?  
Death is within thy guestchamber ; the cry  
Of women breaketh forth with bitter moan,  
And yet thy eyes are dry.



Wilt thou not say, what are these things to us  
Of the captivity? for some dark truth  
Speaks through thy every act, who bearest thus  
The blasting of thy youth.

## EZEKIEL.

Thou sayest well; through me the Eternal Word  
Speaks to the House of Israel by a sign:  
The hearts of all this people shall be stirred  
With greater woe than mine.

When Zion's beauty, by the Chaldees' host  
Profaned, shall be polluted and abhorred;  
Your sons, your daughters, all your soul loves most,  
The harvest of the sword.

And ye who listen now by Chebar's stream  
As to a singer's very lovely voice,  
Holding my words no weightier than a dream  
Which waking sense destroys,

Ye too shall read aright this life of mine  
That showeth forth to what yourselves must come;  
Then shall Ezekiel be to you a sign,  
My deeds no longer dumb.

## A DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL.

And what hast thou to do with love of woman  
Or hope of sons, thou stern and awful seer,  
Whose heart of adamant no passion human,  
No pity knows, nor fear?

To thee was given her tender virginhood  
In this strange land to build thee up a home ;  
Yet, to fulfil a dream, thou sawest good  
To strike thy tent and roam.

The hard, rough life was more than she could bear ;  
Yet never murmuring, 'neath thy cruel eye  
She sank beside the way, in wan despair,  
To travail and to die.

Thy kiss fell deadly as the adder's tooth  
Upon that love-warm bosom—mortal sleep  
Seals up those purple lids—and thou, forsooth,  
Canst neither moan nor weep !

EZEKIEL.

Daughter of Zion, canst not understand  
This misery beyond all common woe ?  
Jerusalem's Prince, thy people and thy land,  
This day, the like shall know.

What are our single sorrows ? Let them eat  
The kindly bread of comfort, who can pour  
The parting tears on the beloved feet  
That may not enter more.

I bear the burthen of a nation's sin,  
Living my life far bitterer than death,  
Since God from that sweet flesh hath gathered in  
His spirit and His breath.

Why will you bruise the broken heart? Even now  
The pang has passed—and she has done with pain;  
Shall not death's mystery, though we know not how,  
Knit soul to soul again?

The house of silence to my feet shall ope  
The doors of Eden, that lost Paradise,  
The promise of a memory and a hope  
Not seen with fleshly eyes.

Farther than foot of man has ever trod,  
Where souls are borne to everlasting rest,  
My love shall meet me in the garden of God,  
Her babe upon her breast.

A PRINCE OF ISRAEL.

Fond, patient fool! What profit shalt thou have  
For all thy joy and honour cast away?  
Look'st thou beneath for pleasures in thy grave,  
When thou hast done thy day?

What is this God, that we should worship Him,  
Who dwells in darkness silent and afar?  
Have heaven's bright lights before our eyes waxed dim  
In sun and moon and star?

Lo! we, the servants of a God unseen,  
Must spend our strength upon the strangers' land  
We made that God our trust—and we have been  
Sold captives to their hand:

While they, the haughty lords of Babylon,  
With pomps and pleasures fill her cloud-girt towers ;  
Then turn like them thy eyes to yonder sun  
And say, "Their gods be ours !"

## EZEKIEL.

Mark me, thou scorner ! now, even now, this day,  
Babylon's Prince, the mighty King of Kings,  
Standeth before the parting of the way,  
An eagle with great wings.

By flight of arrows falls the lot, on whom  
The rushing thunder of his swoop shall light ;  
Ho ! for Jerusalem ! the sign of doom  
Points onward towards the right.

Take off the crown, remove the diadem,  
Thou evil King of Judah, for this day,  
The sword of vengeance in Jerusalem  
Is lord, to smite and slay.

And you, her alienated race, who feed  
On shame among the heathen, you, even you,  
Corrupt, stiff-hearted sons, in very deed,  
Shall prove my words are true.

## A PRINCE OF ISRAEL.

Is this to me ? Thou boastful, railing priest,  
The King of Babylon, my sovereign lord,  
Holds all our lives, the greatest and the least,  
Upon his breath and word.

Prophesy not of evil things, nor dare  
To whisper aught against the gods he serves,  
Lest on thyself his wrath descend, nor spare  
The sword thy speech deserves.

## EZEKIEL.

O enemy of truth ! I know thy will  
To quench the spirit of God, the word I bear ;  
Yet what is life to me, if hate can kill,  
That I should greatly care ?

In heaven and earth I fear no other than  
The One I saw upon the sapphire throne,  
A vision of fire in likeness of a man ;  
Him I have heard and known.

Should I draw back my feet from snares of death,  
Whose joy is dark, but for this certain trust :  
The Lord of life accomplisheth His faith  
To them who sleep in dust ?

Behold ! our graves shall open at His word ;  
The winds shall breathe His breath upon the slain,  
Till the dried bones of rottenness be stirred,  
And Israel live again !

## A DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL.

O master, thou art wise and apt to weave  
In wondrous language thy prophetic song ;  
Almost thou canst beguile our hearts that grieve  
To bear their bitter wrong.

But say, wilt thou lift up the brow of shame,  
Give back our husbands and our little ones,  
All that we loved, devoured by sword and flame,  
Or dashed against the stones?

While we, their murderers' spoil, must tune to mirth  
Our voice of weeping, at the harsh command  
Of those who make us viler than the earth,  
Slaves in this alien land.

Shall we be patient? Can our hearts endure,  
Thus panting sore athirst for their revenge?  
Then let it come like Israel's curse—as sure,  
As horrible, as strange!

## EZEKIEL.

Woman, thy sorrow passes not the sum  
Of woe, thy birthright from thy mother Eve;  
Yet to thy pain the balm of tears may come,  
The ease to cry and grieve:

Not for the man whose soul and flesh are wrung  
By thankless Israel is such fond relief;  
Dumb misery's gall must wither up my tongue,  
And lips o'erfraught with grief.

## AN ELDER OF ISRAEL.

Speak'st thou no word of hope? Will God destroy  
From under heaven and blot out our name,  
Or shall we live to fill the isles with joy,  
That have not heard His fame?

## EZEKIEL.

Yea, thus it shall be, men of mocking speech :

“I pray you come and hear what is the word  
Of prophecy”—ye mutter each to each—

“That cometh from the Lord.”

Much love my people show me with their mouth,  
And sit and listen to the minstrel's strain,  
The while their hearts within them burn with drouth  
Of foul dishonest gain.

Yet though He scatter them like ashes cast  
Upon the winds of heaven, they shall dwell  
Once more upon the mount His strength set fast,  
The Rock of Israel :

His living witness 'mong the sons of men  
With showers of blessing, till the stars wax old,  
And in His likeness we shall waken, when  
New heaven and earth unfold !

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

---

I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, King of kings,  
Now Lord once more of all earthly things,  
Lift up mine eyes to the God of heaven,  
By whom mine honour and might were given.  
My Chaldees and captains seek unto me ;  
For my kingdom's glory and majesty  
While I live are mine—and beside me, none  
May sway the sceptre in Babylon ;  
Not Evil-Merodach, my son.

My mind is come back, that wandered, lost,  
Since I walked in pride, and made my boast,  
I had built this city at mine own cost.

Stand by my bed, thou Hebrew youth,  
Whom fear nor favour could turn from truth :

Dismiss the rest—I have lived my life—  
But call Nitocris, the Prince's wife,  
And Belshazzar, the heir to a realm of strife.



Let them hear me speak—'twill not be for long—  
Time was, these sinews, lithe and strong,

Bore down the lion turned to bay :  
They shall soon be made corruption's prey.

Even now I struggle, and gasp for breath,  
At handgrips with the hunter, Death.

Is this Nitocris? Child, set thou  
My hand on thy Belshazzar's brow,

And mark me—nearer—mine eyes are dim—  
So the evil to come may be turned from him !

NITOCRIS.

My King, my father, what words are these?  
My boy asks a blessing at thy knees !

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

I sprung in strength from a feeble sire,  
Who lent me power to my heart's desire ;  
And launched me like a thunderbolt  
On the subject nations who dared revolt ;  
The God of the Jews gave into my hands  
The Prince and nobles of their lands,  
Whom I sent to Babylon bound with bands ;  
And I had my will and wildest wish  
Upon Egypt's hosts at Charchemish.

My father dying, I sat alone  
Sole sovereign Lord on his royal throne.

My will was law—who questioned me ?  
But my spirit was troubled with woes to be.

When with closed eyes on my bed I lay  
A vision of horror stood there alway,

Till sleep broke from me, and memory lost  
Each sight by thick-coming changes crossed,

And left me with a sense of pain  
For loss to my race and my kingdom's wane  
Imprinted on my burning brain.

Not a man on earth could show this thing  
To any ruler, lord or king,

None but the gods who dwell on high—  
So all my wise men made reply.

And in my fury I gave command  
To slay them all from the face of the land,  
And thou too, Daniel, wert brought to die—  
But my frenzy yielded beneath thine eye.

When thou didst recall my dream, I knew,  
Remembering all, thy words were true ;

And calm and patient, I heard thee say  
How my life's long labour should pass away ;

And now I see, what thou didst unfold,  
My likeness in that head of gold ;

By the silver arms and breast, I know  
The kingdom of my Persian foe,  
Whose gathering hosts, though less than mine,  
With their chariots and arms of silvern shine,  
Shall smite and spoil my royal line.  
And the thighs and body of brass bespeak  
The day of the brazen-coated Greek,  
Avenger of fallen Babylon ;  
For the empire of earth shall ever be won,  
As the peoples rise, in the path of the sun.  
The feet of iron and miry clay,  
A fierce, yet broken power betray,  
Who shall plough on the earth and the ocean foam  
The name, scarce whispered yet, of Rome.  
I saw, till a stone, cut out without hands,  
Broke up those kingdoms to desert sands ;  
Gold, brass and iron were no more  
But chaff of the summer threshing floor,  
Swept far away in the wild wind's mirth,  
And the stone that smote them filled the earth.  
To me, the King, thy God made known  
His secret purpose by this stone ;  
No kingdom on earth shall stand but His own.  
And low upon my face did I fall,  
And on my right hand set thee, my thrall,  
That didst understand and interpret all.

NITOCRIS.

A wife—a mother—'twere mine to rue  
The day that should prove thy saying true.

DANIEL.

And I, God's prophet, bid thee restore  
The heirs of Judah's house, before  
Their wrongs come home to thine own door.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Was I an oppressor, to seek my dues  
Of ancient tribute from the Jews,  
Which their King did impiously refuse ?  
My vassal, thrice conquered, who bore unawed  
The name I gave him, "Justice of God,"  
I, Jehovah's sword and iron rod.  
Like a lion's spring was my manhood's rage—  
Ah, Daniel, my son, no touch of age  
Had changed thee yet to a bearded sage !  
Was I not just ? that found no room  
For mercy in a traitor's doom,  
Who clave to the way his fathers trod  
Of foul revolt against their God,  
And brought those woes to pass, foretold  
Against their city by prophets of old.  
God's purpose was fulfilled on them,  
When I laid straight siege to Jerusalem.

Two years my leaguer they withstood,  
Till my slings and arrows were drunk with blood ;  
And burnt with hunger, devoured with heat,  
Of the children's flesh did the fathers eat,  
Ere the stubborn necks would bow to defeat.

DANIEL.

The tender woman in want so sore  
Could slay and feed on the babe she bore,  
And curse with her eye those lips whose kiss  
Had brought such fruit of love as this,  
To thirst for the blood that was hers and his.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

The city fell to my assault ;  
God dealt according to their fault  
With king and priest made captive there,  
For by His name I had made them swear !

DANIEL.

Thy work that day was rash and hot :  
I pray, to thy charge He may lay it not.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Was I cruel ? by Riblah's stream  
I see the shadows pass on like a dream :  
Above, upon my glorious throne  
A conquering King, I sit alone,

And wheeling past my feet below,  
My armèd hosts, with sword and bow,  
Like mighty rivers glittering flow.

Up unto heaven above me rings  
The sound of harps with many strings,  
And shout of men : " Hail, King of kings ! "

There to be judged, my archers led  
Judah's pale Prince, and on his head  
We passed a rebel's sentence dread.

Was I cruel ? before his face  
I crushed the buds of his evil race :

Those false eyes looked their last upon  
The quivering limbs of his youngest son,  
Ere he went in fetters to Babylon.

Enough for violated faith !  
I gave him life when he prayed for death :

Yet 'neath my own closed lids will rise  
The vision of those bleeding eyes !

Hide them beneath the earth ! I gave  
Rich odours to burn and a royal grave  
For his corse, who lived long years my slave,

Till he died in Babylon under my yoke,  
After the word his prophets spoke,  
For the oath he despised and the pledge he broke.

Did I not right ? By the God of heaven  
The scourge of His wrath to my hand was given,

To smite that city of the King  
With the poison of asps and the dragon's sting.

## DANIEL.

With a laugh of scorn thy chiefs behold  
The hairs of snow and the hairs of gold,  
By vain despair's resistance reft,  
Still clinging round each bloody heft.  
The babe within his mother's womb  
Escaped not in that day of doom !  
The sword cut off like the water's foam  
The pomp of Judah's royal home ;  
And lest red slaughter's arm should tire,  
The beams of cedar were set on fire,  
Consuming even unto the ark of God,  
In the holiest place of His own abode :  
Then all around thy guards broke down  
The walls of that rebellious town.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

What spoil we took no man can tell,  
Save the priests who wax rich in the temple of Bel !  
The war's first fruits to me belong,  
Young men, fair virgins, the wise and strong :  
Their souls and bodies are made my spoil,  
To build my name on the rock, and toil  
For life's bare needs on a foreign soil.

DANIEL.

God knew this people as His own  
Whose faces thou didst grind to stone.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Zion I crushed—yet the Prince of Tyre  
Provoked me to smite her walls with fire,  
When he said : “Aha ! I am a god  
That sit in the sea’s heart, deep and broad.”  
Then we, his scornful boast to tame,  
The terrible of nations came,  
Strange hosts of many an outland name.  
Shall iron break the chariot wheel,  
The northern iron and the steel ?  
The tread of men, the tramp of horse,  
Sweep on ’gainst Tyre with the sound and force  
Of floods broke loose in the watercourse.  
Yet still the untamed sea-fortress rears  
Her stubborn head through the wingèd years,  
Till all the manhood of my realm  
Bent their bald heads beneath the helm,  
And burthens galled the shoulders of strength  
Through the slow and weary siege’s length.  
When all was done, and the city ta’en,  
My years, my treasures, the blood of my slain,  
I had spent them all and my labour was vain !



In the still of night, o'er the trackless sea,  
The children of ocean, undaunted and free,  
With a nation's ransom fled from me.

## DANIEL.

Then God, for on Tyre thou hadst done His hest,  
Led on thy armies towards the West.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Woe worth the day ! for loss and pain  
To the peoples who chafed beneath my reign ;  
By my sword in Egypt fell the slain !

Her teeming race for my slaves I took,  
Her river I used as my water brook,  
In her dragon's jaws I set a hook.

The Ethiop, and the Lybian far,  
Where rank rebellion's branches are,  
Taste of the bitter fruits of war.

'Neath distant skies less known than these,  
Beyond the Pillars of Hercules,  
I stretched my arm o'er lands and seas ;

Yea, from the sea of the rising sun  
To the depths that hide him when day is done,  
Earth's empire by my sword was won.

When my hands to spoil found nothing worth,  
Homeward I fared by the chilly North :

With riches past count, with might and fame  
Beyond my youth's desires, I came  
To the golden city of my birth,  
The glory and wonder of all the earth,  
Mine heritage from sire to son,  
This mighty city, Babylon.

## NITOCRIS.

Where happier than Sennacherib,  
By his own sons stabbed beneath the rib,  
Thou bearest yet the sword of power,  
A monarch to thy dying hour !  
A daughter's bosom, a daughter's arm,  
Thy living pillows, tender and warm.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Oh ! I am sick, and sigh for rest—  
Close not those curtains by the west—  
Once more that sight I have loved the best,  
The splendours of the waning light,  
In many-coloured changes bright,  
Full on my Eden of delight,  
Those hanging gardens my love and pride  
Reared for my Queen, my Median bride,  
When I tasted joy in my summer tide.  
The alabaster runnels lave  
Those terraced heights ; the rosebays wave

Their crimson blooms ; the luscious palm  
Breathes heavy with the scent of balm,

And taller with each year that dies,  
Do tamarisk and pomegranate rise,  
Where I did plant my paradise

With every fair tree that yieldeth fruit—  
Where the love song of birds is never mute.

Lo ! yonder in that myrtle grove,  
Like a shepherd youth I wooed my love :

And there she lies embalmed in death—  
Ah me ! the fig-tree languisheth,

The vine is dried up by swift decay,  
Since joy from my soul is withered away.

Yes, she died young—and from that hour  
I lived for majesty and power.

Look down on mighty Babylon ;  
Behold the works that I have done,  
And greater yet, but half begun !

Daughter Nitocris, what I would,  
But cannot achieve, do thou make good.

NITOCRIS.

Ay, Father ; may I earn by this  
More praise than famed Semiramis !

DANIEL.

I, Daniel, tell thee they must fall,  
Thy palace towers and the city wall,  
That mate with the storm-clouds, shall ruin all !

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Could we repent, like Nineveh,  
Would thy God put off the evil day  
My slaves and captives boast of ? When  
My race shall be cut off from men,  
My house be made the lions' den,  
Where bird unclean and ravening beast  
Shall shriek and growl o'er their loathsome feast.

BELSHAZZAR.

Tell thy Belshazzar, what hast thou done  
To earn this curse from sire to son ?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

For a long life spent such meed I win,  
And thou, Belshazzar, dost ask of my sin ?  
Not by the grandchild of my blood  
My madness can be understood !  
Yet, if it must be—boy, stand near,  
That wisdom may reach Belshazzar's ear.

NITOCRIS.

Ay, let him take to heart thy curse,  
Lest God may yet afflict him worse.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

I was lord of captives and wealth untold,  
When I made in my own heart's lust overbold,  
An image of Bel in purest gold.

Full sixty cubits I reared his height  
As the symbol of my will and might,  
That through ages should stand in my dream's despite.

And glorious as the risen sun,  
Afar that wondrous semblance shone  
O'er the plain of Dura, by Babylon.

Like magic rising from the ground,  
Did pipe and chord of music sound,  
While my princes and captains were gathered around,  
And at my word obedient, fell  
In worship before the image of Bel :

Then man by man, every language and race  
Bowed down at his feet an awestruck face ;

For I bade them choose 'twixt death by fire  
And their spirits' homage to my desire.

But the chief of my Chaldees then drew near  
With envenomed whisper in my ear :

"Those Jews, who stand first in favour with thee,  
O'er the province of Babylon set above me,  
Those men, O King, have spurned thy decree.

"They serve not thy gods, nor have worship paid  
To the golden image which thou hast made."

Then fury stung me : I felt a change  
Convulse my face, till its form grew strange,  
And my brain seethed, hot with a fiend's revenge.

DANIEL.

Seven times its wont, at thy desire,  
Was heated the burning furnace of fire,  
That its flame with pitch and naphtha fed  
Rose fifty cubits overhead ;  
And those three servants leal and true,  
Who bore their ban with the name of Jew,  
Bound, into the midst, thy strong men threw.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

But not thee, Daniel ! Who durst offend  
By envious slander against my friend ?  
Into fire they fell—I looked again,  
And lo ! by the flames my strong men slain !  
Once more I looked—not three, but four,  
Walked scathless on the smelting floor :  
'Twas an angel semblance beside them trod,  
For that fourth was like the Son of God.  
He smote with a moist and whistling wind  
The flames before them and behind ;  
Unscorched was their hair, unmoved their mind.  
And out of the fire I heard them sing  
Blessings and praise to heaven's high King.  
I stood, astonished, and changed my word,  
And worshipped that mighty God, their Lord,

For I knew no other God but this  
Could so deliver those children of His.

## DANIEL.

Hadst thou been wise in time, and known  
The God of Israel for thy own,  
The everlasting Holy One,  
Not at thy hand would He now require  
Those lives He ransomed from the fire.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, by men called great,  
Was flourishing in my high estate,  
At rest in my house—yet again, on my bed,  
The thoughts and visions of my head  
Haunted my dreams with troubles dread.  
Again, O Daniel! to thee was given  
The spirit of the God of heaven ;  
Thy faithful tongue with pain and ruth,  
Was bold to speak the awful truth.  
How didst thou urge me, and implore  
To judge uprightly, and sin no more,  
But show compassion to the poor !  
And break with the past—if it might be  
God's mercy so should deal with me.  
One year did give thy warning proof ;  
When down I gazed from my palace roof  
On the works I had made for my own behoof,

And said : " Is not this great Babylon,  
Built by the captives my sword has won,  
With the spoil of all nations beneath the sun ?

" For the home of my Imperial race,  
By the might of my power, of my sovereign grace,  
I have made and adorned this glorious place."

With the word in my mouth I heard from heaven  
A voice flash like the falling levin :

" Nebuchadnezzar, to thee, O King,  
From God most High is spoke this thing :

" From thee the kingdom shall depart,  
Till thou acknowledge in thy heart

" 'Twas His to give as He hath willed."

Yea, that same hour was the curse fulfilled.

Horror and shuddering upon me came ;  
Of memory, speech, and human shame  
Bereft, my spirit was broken tame.

NITOCRIS.

But why didst thou fly to the desert wild  
From the shelter of home, from the care of thy child ?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

The leper's taint was on my mind,  
My own slaves drove me from my kind,  
And little right the faithful few  
To this poor wreck of power could do !



NITOCRIS.

Could'st thou not trust my love to cling  
To thee till death, my father, my King?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

From the house of my glory I dwelt aloof,  
Where the oxen browse with trampling hoof :  
Of the grass of the field like them I ate ;  
With the dew of heaven my body was wet ;  
Ay, seven years ! but what did I know  
Of seasons or times in those days of woe ?  
Naked I roamed, till my hair was grown  
Like an eagle's plumage, and hard as stone,  
My nails, like talons, ran to bone.

NITOCRIS.

O father ! from my heart is wrung  
A drop of blood with each word from thy tongue.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Those days are ended—my hand and eye  
Witness my trust in God most High ;  
Taught by His light how poor a thing  
This glory of an earthly king !  
While I stand on the silent river's brim,  
Stout of heart though faint of limb,  
As the Lord of life I bow to Him !

NITOCRIS.

And I, too, father—if He forgive,  
It may be my son shall reign and live !

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Lo, as a king 'mongst kings, I tread  
The mansions of the mighty dead,  
Each throned in glory on his bed.  
Can dust and darkness claim kindred thus ?  
“ Art thou become as one of us ? ”  
Spare me such sepulchre of pride,  
But lay me in the earth, beside  
Her, my soul's joy, my youth's fair bride.  
My monument for ever stands,  
Like a mountain chain from the desert sands  
Raised by sheer strength of human hands :  
Those triple walls, those gates of brass,  
While the ages of men shall blossom and pass,  
Remain to witness what Lord I was ;  
Fire and flood shall sweep them o'er,  
Man shall dwell there nevermore !  
They shall be heaps—yet wondering fame  
Shall dig their depths and find my name !

NITOCRIS.

Shall I see this ?—Alas, for these  
Our pleasant homes, our palaces !

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

No more, but as a yeanning lamb  
Scorched by the sand-storm's blast I am :  
Pass, light and glory, hovering yet  
Upon the verge of darkness—let  
The curtains fall—the sun is set !

# SONNETS.

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## HOMER.

---

STRONG son of earth's hot youth, divinely born  
To song, when grace and harmony were first  
In early Greece, yet by thy mother nursed  
With human tears, beneath reproach and scorn.  
Blind seer ! the light within thy heart cried out  
'Gainst destiny, to creation's travail throes  
Gave voice—to men, the slaves of fear and doubt,  
The richest music breathed by mortal woes.  
Homer, thou quenchless spirit of Hellas ! Time  
Nor change can cast away thy living word,  
Poured, like the golden honey of her clime,  
Down through the ages, and for ever heard  
In murmured sympathy with sea and sky,  
The glory of the land that saw thee live and die !

## SAPPHO.

---

GREAT priestess of the mysteries of fate,  
Undaunted Sappho ! eloquent to sing  
Of love's deep heart, the budding pang of spring,  
Sick joy's cold thrill of anguish passionate !  
'Mongst Hellas' daughters, thou, self-immolate,  
Alone shalt speak for ever, while the sting  
Of man's deceit from quivering lips can wring  
The cry of woman to her perjured mate.  
Thou wast not earthly born ; a living fire  
Of the keen lightning's essence was thy sire ;  
Thy soul was uttered forth in one long kiss  
Once and for all : then, wrecked by broken faith,  
The sunken rock beneath thy tide of bliss,  
Flashed back immortal through the sea of death !

## ÆSCHYLUS.

---

HERO and poet, Athens' giant son !

Upon her side 'gainst Persian hordes, how strong  
Thy battle arm ! how grand and rich thy song

Hymning her glorious days of Marathon  
And Salamis ! Seer of the unknown God,

By vision dark thou didst behold as in  
A glass the mystery of woe and sin,  
The awful law of blood that will have blood.

Lo, o'er the mirror of thy soul athirst

For justice, flashed the eyes unquenchable  
Of slaughtered forms, uprisen through death and  
hell ;

Such prophet wert thou, Æschylus, the first  
To build the tragic stage, through eye and ear  
Smiting upon men's hearts the image of their fear.

## SOPHOCLES.

---

THRICE happy bard, with mind, with speech, with form  
Supreme in strength and beauty, on thy tongue  
Dropped honey ; in thy fingers, soft and warm,  
Language was set as wax, to earn so young  
Thy crown as tragic singer, and thy name,  
“The Bee,” in Athens : long thy glorious years  
Rang with applause, and burned with passion’s tears  
Passing the promise of thy early fame.  
Oak of the land, thy ninetieth summer’s fruit  
Bloomed fairest, sweetest, in the virgin bride,  
Daughter and sister, her who grandly died,  
Antigone : and when the chords were mute  
Beneath thy hand, adoring Hellas bore  
Their echoes in her heart, divine for evermore.

## EURIPIDES.

---

BORN to man's troubles, of a sorrowing woman,

In that dark hour when victory was wrung  
From fate, at Salamis, how true and human

Upon thy lip the tragic music sprung,  
Euripides ! and through the crash of war  
The pulse of passion winged thy words afar

Who spake not as a god, but wept in common  
With flesh and blood, and showed them as they are.  
Sweet voice of wisdom ! when the captive thrall

Of Grecian birth could mingle with his groans  
Some fragments of thy speech, the chains would fall

From off his bruised limbs, the scattered stones  
Of mercy's altar rise again beneath  
Thy song that charmed to peace their tyrants' doom of  
death.

## SHAKESPEARE.

---

A VOICE of nature thrilling everywhere  
Through pulse and nerve of living heart and head—  
Crowned with a garland ever fresh and fair,  
Sovereign among the unforgotten dead,  
Shakespeare is with us, next the Word of truth,  
The vein of wisdom's jewels most desired ;  
Who, three dark centuries past, a God-sent youth,  
Looked out on life with prophet eye inspired—  
The touch of fire was on his lips, to teach  
Heaven's harmonies on earth, whose music, rolled  
Through rugged numbers of our Saxon speech,  
Rang sweetly as the angels' harps of gold,  
Till kindred choirs that lent, took back their own  
To sing before the everlasting throne.



## BYRON.

---

Son of the morning ! fallen to earth from heaven,  
With lips of music, eyes of flame and breath  
Of passion, as from 'mong the shining Seven  
One angel banished to this valley of death :  
Wast thou not heard what time the new-born stars  
Sang out for joy of young creation's day ?  
Ere thou hadst known the taste of sin that mars  
God's image, blurred within the house of clay.  
Byron ! thou wast not of the chill gray North  
Where thou wast born : unto reviving Greece  
Thy soul, athirst for beauty's joy, went forth,  
To pass through pain and turmoil into peace :  
Poet ! above thy forehead's early snows  
Spring fadeless glory and love—the laurel and the rose.

## LAMARTINE.

---

THOU unforgotten, dost remember me  
Afar with God? The girl with woman's tears  
Deep welling o'er thy sorrow-laden years—  
Knit by a daughter's kindness unto thee  
Childless, and I an orphan? Second birth  
To heavenly light, to song divine, to love  
Ineffable, whose gift is from above,  
I owe thee, dearer than the ties of earth.  
Still in the pathway of thy evening  
A radiance pales the glories of the morn :  
From my life's book the first fresh leaflets torn  
In hope's dim borderland lie quivering ;  
There from thy soul a voice doth stir my own,  
So well I know that deep and tender tone !

## JOB XVII. 14.

---

BELOVED dust, from whom my being sprung,  
Fond lips, that felt thy little child's caress,  
Untimely sealed—though faithful memory clung  
To looks and words recalled from nothingness :  
Father ! I was thy only one, thy pride :  
Dying, thou bad'st thy baby girl be true  
And fearless, in the deep and adverse tide  
That rose against me as I lived and grew.  
Why was I left, and thou, so great of heart,  
Cut off before the prize of life was won,  
Thy heir an infant, and thy glorious part  
'Mongst the world's best and highest scarce begun ?  
So, death claimed kindred with me, and his power  
Taught me to taste of wrong, the orphan's bitter dower.

## M. L. A. B.

---

BRIGHT noon of beauty quenched in widowhood,  
True loving broken heart that lived for me—  
My earthly wealth of all things pure and good,  
My treasure garnered in the home to be—  
Ah, sweet my mother ! were those same fond eyes  
Set 'mongst the stars about the sapphire throne,  
While mine searched, tearless, through the iron skies  
In God's creation utterly alone ?  
I loved thee well, and yet how little worth  
The joy that paid thee for a mother's pain,  
The passionate, yearning hope to live again !—  
Till that dark even of my day of birth,  
The angel gathered thee like golden corn,  
And left my maimèd life as flesh from spirit torn.

# TILL DEATH US DO PART.

(*July 3rd, 1882.*)

---

FIVE years gone by since thou didst call me wife !

It seems a little month of cloudless days  
Since with thy love joy came into my life,

A radiant stranger ; and the fond heart prays  
We may be thus together all our years,

Or few or many, for I ask to live  
Thy time—no longer, as I know no fears,

No hope, without thee that this world can give.  
Oh ! my soul's blessing, God's best gift—mine own—

Let Him take back my treasure with thy breath.  
When it seems best to Him, but not alone—

I would not part from thee in life nor death,  
Till, in our Father's house, these eyes shall see  
The marriage feast unto eternity.

## SEVEN YEARS.

(*July 3rd, 1884.*)

---

SEVEN years this day together—ay, seven years  
Our mortal bliss has lasted, and the love  
Of our espousals blooms untainted of  
This world's foul breath, affection's mingling tears  
The gentle dew that feeds its heavenly growth.  
So may we live, so may God keep us both  
To see our silver wedding, and thy sun  
Brighten at eve, and then—my life is done.  
Our golden union in a holier band  
Shall draw my spirit towards the promised land :  
For never more to any earthly thing,  
Save only thee, whose love has filled the loss  
That crushed my youth beneath the bitter cross,  
The tendrils of my heart's desire may cling.

# LOVE IS OF GOD.

(1886.)

---

NINE golden years since, in the depth of grief,  
Love whispered me of hope and happy rest  
In earth's first, dearest tie, for ever blest  
From young creation's morn : O Time ! thou thief  
Of nature, now give pause, forget us here—  
My sun has touched his zenith ; this the hour,  
Life, hated once, is rich in joy and power,  
And light is sweet—yet wherefore should I fear ?  
Love dies not, passing through the starry sea  
From depth to depth of suns, where never clomb  
The thought of living man, unto that home  
Where neither mortal change nor pain can be :  
Though bonds of earth to that eternal shore  
Reach not, love is of God, for evermore.

## IN MEMORIAM.

(*F. L. G., February, 1885.*)

---

ART thou no longer but a fond regret,  
O friend and brother, ever kind and true?  
Close by the altar steps I see thee yet,  
As when I first such tie of kindred knew,  
The gift of wedded love : no son of earth  
Through chastening fire a heart more guileless bore,  
More precious to the few who proved thy worth,  
Rough in the grain, but honest to the core.  
And now thou sleepest with thy fathers—gone  
To peace—and though in flesh and blood, our eyes  
Shall see thy face no more, we hope—for One  
Hath spoke the word : “Thy brother shall arise :”  
And to His hands, with trust that conquers dread,  
We yield in silence our beloved dead.



# ALICE MARY CUNNINGHAM.

*(Descendant of Allan Cunningham. Born at Sea.)*

---

WEE black-eyed fairy, blossom of the sea,  
What strange conjunction of portentous stars  
Looked down on thy beginning? Joy to thee,  
Born on the waves like foam-sprung Venus! Mars  
Is bound to use thee kindly, little lass,  
Whose father serves the Empress Queen, and has  
No less a gossip than the god of wars;  
While Neptune sends thy nurses, British tars.  
Grow fair and wise, until the breeze of fame  
Shall whisper thee, thou bear'st a poet's name;  
Fair weather smile upon thee from the blue  
Of deepest heaven, and with unfading light  
Instruct thy maiden sail to trim aright  
Her snowy wings, and keep thee pure and true!

## FLORENCE PENNINGTON.

*(Drowned in the River Dovey, Merionethshire, August 24th, 1886.)*

---

MAIDEN of England's true and fearless blood,  
Swift to redeem, at cost of thy fair life,  
A brother, striving with the hungry flood  
To wrest from fate his spent and sinking wife.  
Another by the brink had idly stood  
With wringing hands and feeble echoing cry,  
But thou wert brave to dare what woman could  
And, like a soldier's sister, nobly die :  
Sudden and strong the treacherous current bore  
Thy lisson limbs down to a timeless rest,  
And cast the husband senseless on the shore,  
His babes' dead mother locked upon his breast.  
Yet 'twas enough—thy sweet breath given for him  
Shall burn in memory's lamp no years can quench or dim.

## IN MEMORIAM.

*(Arthur O'Shaughnessy. January 30th, 1881.)*

---

HOME to thy wife and babes ! Are ye all gone  
Unto the land where sounds of human praise  
Perish forgotten ? Ah, how few the days  
Since ye were earthly happy ! two made one  
By love, that bids our mortal dust put on  
Immortal longings ; now for you there stays  
The marriage feast with those whose rest is won.  
Poet ! thy spirit dwelt beyond the sun  
In song, and thou hast lived thy life, with aim  
More noble than the world's reward could give :  
For I have heard thee say, " I would not strive  
For fleeting honours, but the enduring name  
To come hereafter "—dead, thy voice shall live  
Among the deathless minstrel heirs of fame.

## SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE.

---

SEALED with the kiss of God, he takes his rest,  
The ancient of a hundred years gone by  
Like shades and sunbeams o'er the evening's breast,  
Yet crowned with honour to eternity :  
For thou hast lived thy life, O son of time !  
Walking with God, and even to the end  
In thee have age and weakness shown sublime,  
Whom want and woe used ever as their friend.  
O Hebrew father ! in this Christian land  
Be unforgotten ! He whose name is Love  
Receive thee that fulfilled His first command,  
And join again with her whose spirit strove  
In thee 'gainst death's dark barrier—satisfied  
With days, go home in joy a bridegroom to thy bride.

## TO MRS. KENDAL.

*(As Claire in the "Ironmaster.")*

---

THE wounded spirit that can break, not bend,  
When love betrayed counts not the bitter cost  
Of scorn's requital, and the iron frost  
Turned withering alike on foe and friend—  
That pass—the hardest in the fate of woman,  
To shrink in madness from a husband's side,  
And vows too rashly spoke in stubborn pride—  
These canst thou bid us feel with thee in common.  
Not with the cunning of consummate art,  
But with the life and pulse of thy whole heart,  
Dost thou so move us to the very core  
Of soul and body, with thy long, low wail,  
True misery's cry—till truth and hope prevail,  
And love's rich blessing crowns thee evermore.

# HENRY THE FIFTH OF FRANCE.

(*September, 1883.*)

---

IN peace with God, a blessing on his lips,

Henry of France has won the crown of life ;  
Ruling his spirit, while he slowly sips

The bitterness of death, through Nature's strife  
The blameless Prince comes greater now than they  
Who wade through blood to thrones. By time  
and chance

Unchanged, he swerved not from the better way :

For himself, nothing ; hoping all for France.  
Heaven looked on him, and chose him for its own :

And though he never felt the hidden sting  
Bound in the circlet of a mortal crown,

All men shall say of him, " This was a King ;"  
And buried with the noblest of his line,  
Lies the white lily flag of Right Divine.

## PRINCESS BEATRICE.

---

DAUGHTER of England ! in the golden hour  
When wedded love its heavenly flame has shed  
With praises of thy people, and a shower  
Of marriage blessings on thy gracious head ;  
Why do they breathe for thee the self-same prayer,  
In Israel's language and thy mother tongue,  
The patriarch of a hundred years, the young  
Bright children ? God be with the loving pair !  
Why, but for thou hast poured thy pure heart's  
treasure  
Back to its well-spring, and thy morning bloom  
Laid, a fair garland, on thy father's tomb,  
To comfort her whose sorrow knows no measure.  
Love is of God, and He has crowned your life  
With love's immortal joy, husband and wife.

# QUEEN ADELAIDE'S TREE

## IN WINDSOR FOREST.

---

MIDST Windsor Chase, where Norman William made  
His hunting realm, the home of his delight ;  
Where many a time the Druids' secret glade  
Was lit by fires of sacrifice at night—  
Deep in old fairy-land, whose mystic shade  
Strives with the all-seeing sun, half dim, half bright ;  
This tree was set by good Queen Adelaide,  
A landmark of fair England's fairest sight.  
Lo, in the vista through the forest lies  
Proud Windsor, and the high-embattled tower,  
Where Scotland's king was found by beauty's eyes,  
And taught to sing away the prison hour.  
Ah, ancient stones, what love, what joy, what tears  
Have writ the story of Victoria's years !



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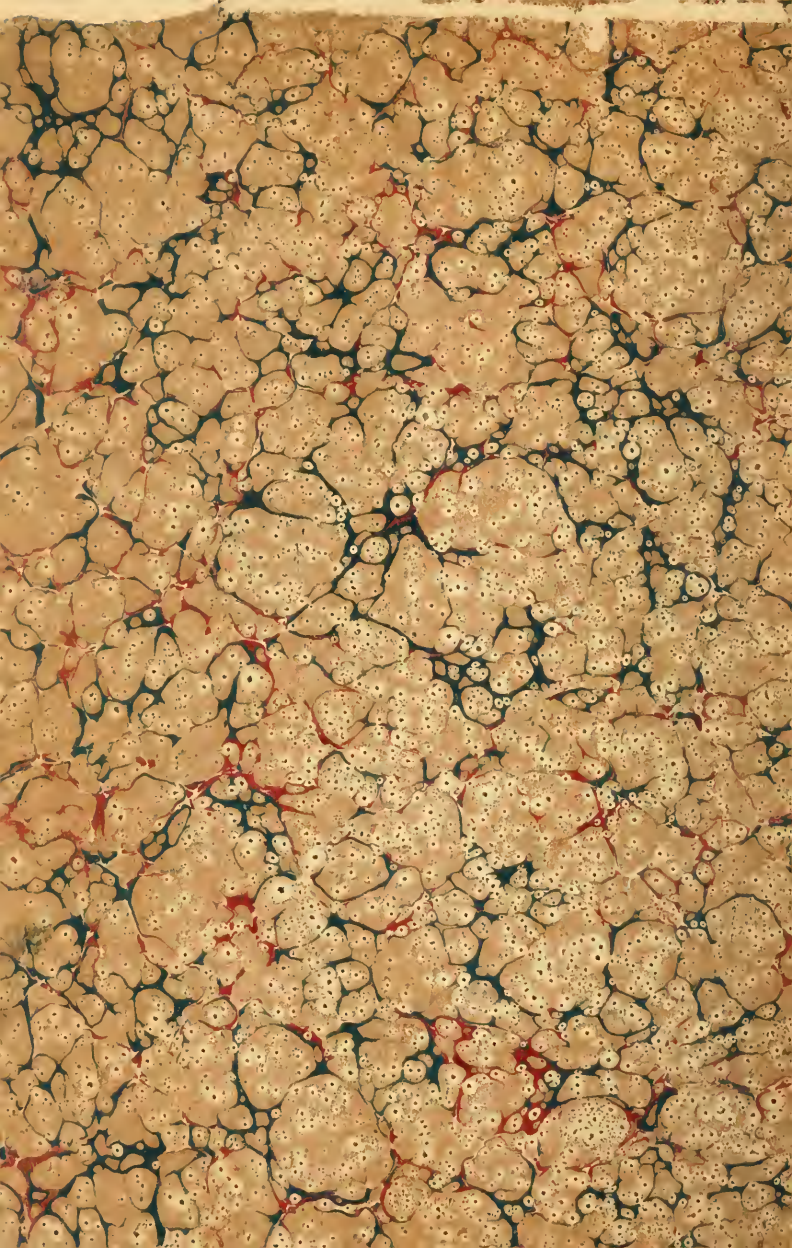
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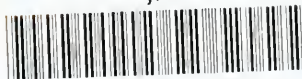




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